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ONE TOO MANY.

HABIT, more than reason or impulse, is the governing influence of mankind; hence it was difficult for Richard Hazlehurst fully to adjust his consciousness to the fact of his changed relations with Irene Van Voorst. But then he had been engaged to her for two years, and even before that time had associated her intimately in every thought and intention. She had embroidered his slippers ever since she was thirteen, and he had bought her Christmas presents for some nine years with unfailing regularity. Irene had become, besides his habit, so to speak, his conscience. She possessed, in truth, that unfaltering integrity of character, combined with divine calm of self-assertion, which results in an irresistible habit of decision. She governed her coterie; and Hazlehurst, in particular, had rested his actions so confidently upon her imperious mandates that, without her, he at first felt himself unequal to the task of making up his mind about the most trivial question. For a week after their engagement was broken he nursed a gentle melancholy and rigidly adhered to the routine Irene had long since marked out for him. At the end of that time he began to experience a vague wonder as to whether his habitual dullness betrayed a radical incapacity for pleasure. Just to test the matter he joined some friends and went to the the-

atre, had a supper afterwards, and did not return to his rooms until three o'clock in the morning. The next day a close observer might have seen that his shackles were broken and one by one were falling, and in a week his emancipation was entire. It must be confessed that when he first saw himself in process of deterioration he felt the joy of successful rebellion, for his subjection had been long and complete; but when his full enfranchisement from feminine tyranny was established, he began to look back upon his old servitude with tender regrets. Irene had, it is true, taken the measure of his liberty with a trifle too much precision, but the dear girl's views had no doubt been admirable. Her tastes were all formed upon the best standards, and although good taste is a fallible guide at times, Irene's was far more infallible than his own. He felt an older and a sadder man now that he could carry around the scent of cigars unrebuked, and wear, unnoticed, signs of dissipation about his eyes. It was too early in the season for social engagements; he had long since renounced the frivolity of evening visits save at one well-known house in Thirty-Fifth Street, and time was heavy on his hands. He used to sit over the fire at his club thinking sentimentally about Irene. She did not approve of clubs, nor of the talk and

habits of men when congregated together; she had no lofty idea of their standards when unredeemed by woman's presence; she pronounced billiards, except in a private parlor, an unworthy pursuit; she had spoken more than once somewhat peremptorily concerning the enormity of dropping in promiscuously at theatres and gaining a nice discrimination about a certain class of actresses not altogether in the highest line of the profession. Yes, Hazlehurst sighed when he told himself that he had nobody to look after him now, and he took a sort of morbid interest in his own facile descent into the pleasant Avernus of bachelor life. It was in one of these moments of regretful reminiscence of his former censor that he sat down and wrote a long letter to Miss Van Voorst in Paris. It was a very pretty letter indeed, with much honest and unaffected humility and sorrow in it, and an implied confession that without her he was on his way to the dogs. Hazlehurst was proud of his production; some of it sounded really poetical, and reminded him of Byron in his darkest vein of poisoned regret; he had no idea he could have done anything so well up to high literary mark. Having thus spent his suffering in song, he no longer felt wholly discouraged with himself; in fact, after dispatching the letter he was in the best of spirits.

The next morning he chanced to drop into the office of his elder brother, Thomas Hazlehurst, a banker on Wall Street.

"I was in hopes you would come in, Dick," said Thomas Hazlehurst, looking up from his paper, "for I want you to do me a favor."

"All right."

"You know I am expecting poor little Flossy Weir by the Russia, which will probably be in before to-morrow morning. I am obliged to be in Philadelphia to-night; hence I cannot be here to meet the child. Now, I want you to call at the Brevoort to-morrow, where Flossy will be with the Worths, who are to stop in town for twenty-four hours, and take her over to her aunt's in New Jersey. Mrs. Wylie and I are joint guardians."

"I remember. Poor little girl!"

"She is a poor little girl. Her father hardly left her sixpence, beggarly bankrupt that he was!"

"Lost everything in '73, did he not?"

"He was among the downhills long before that; the grand smash-up merely gave him an opportunity of coming to grief in good company. We got him this position abroad, but he was thoroughly broken down, and it was one of the poorest consulates in Europe. Why on earth he made me guardian of his little girl, I don't comprehend! Her aunt has been in twice to see me about the matter; she is a disagreeable old woman, but will give her niece a home for the present, and then we will have her with us. She will be considerably cut up, no doubt, about her father,—an only child, and no mother; there was probably a close tie between them, and you must be sympathizing and all that sort of thing."

"I'll do my best," said Richard.

"She must be fifteen or so. I remember something about her. We all dined once with Weir when he lived in Gramercy Park, and some pretty little girl, probably Florence herself, came in at dessert and amused us by singing songs and dancing a minuet on the dinner-table. I can think what a charming child she was," added Dick, reflectively, "and she wore gray kid boots which set like a glove."

"How old was she then?"

"Four or five, and that is ten years ago, at least."

"I supposed she was younger. But never mind, her age makes no difference, and I will be much obliged if you will meet her and take her out to New Jersey."

Accordingly, the following morning Hazlehurst entered the Brevoort at eleven o'clock and sent up his card to Miss Weir. He had no special interest in the matter; he was commiserative towards Florence—no more. Hard lines for the girl, no doubt, that her father had had so many failures, but— He was about to finish this meditation with a sigh, when he caught sight of a face opposite, the very reflection of what seemed to him

a joyous reveille, an awakening call to the sweetest emotion he had ever felt. Was this Florence Weir? It could be no body else, — this pale girl whom the mirror had betrayed loitering timidly outside the door, and who now came in with that pitiful smile she had summoned upon her face. She was more than fourteen, or even fifteen. She was tall, slender, with the most wonderful face Hazlehurst had ever met, although hard sorrow had written unmistakable lines upon it of late. He started to his feet, strode forward and seized both her hands in his.

"Poor little Flossy!" said he, in the kindest voice. "Poor little Flossy!"

The tears welled up to her dark eyes, and her red lips curved down.

"Don't cry, *don't!*" murmured Dick, holding her hands tightly and looking down into her face with the muscles of his own twitching. "I know it all; it is terrible, — terrible! But you have cried too much already, my poor child. You have got over the worst, and here you are among old friends who will do all they can for you."

"I know," she responded, conquering her tears and looking up at him with a gleam of momentary comfort; for indeed the face above hers was one to inspire comfort, — it was so noble and so good, with such real sympathy in its kind eyes. "The worst of it is over," she went on. "It was dreary to be on ship-board. The nights almost killed me — they were so endless — so lonely; the sounds were so strange, and gave me such horrible thoughts of that awful sea! The days were a little better, but although the friends you sent me were very kind, very considerate for me, they had not known papa, nor loved him. Now, you knew him, Mr. Hazlehurst, — you knew papa and loved him."

"Yes," muttered Dick, "I can appreciate your loss. I knew your good father. But you must bear up; such losses come to all." He was not fluent at consolation, and being familiar with the play of Hamlet perhaps unconsciously rendered the king's words to the orphan in a sort of paraphrase. Florence was more grateful than was ever the

prince, and rejoiced in such sympathy without discovering his source of inspiration. She gave him a sweet, longing glance.

"Oh, Mr. Hazlehurst," she said tenderly, "you cannot think what it is to me to find such real kindness when I was feeling so lonely in the world!" And Dick, still holding her hands, gathered both into one of his and smoothed them with the other. He was powerless to say a word, but he looked volumes.

"It is all settled, I suppose, that I am to go to aunt Lucy's until I find something to do," she went on in that subdued spent voice which in certain intonations was thrillingly sweet; then, as the stress of feeling came upon her, her utterance grew strained and hoarse.

"You know how poor papa left me. I have just two hundred and seven dollars now. I have tried to be very economical, but have spent as much more. I made all my new dresses myself, — every one. I do not think I am helpless and need be dependent. I can speak four languages, I paint tolerably in water-colors, and I can do anything with my hands which other women can do. Do you not think I can find work to support myself, Mr. Hazlehurst?"

"I am sure of it," answered Dick; "but it is too soon to speak of such things. I am to take you to Mrs. Wylie's at three o'clock."

She shivered slightly.

"I seem to care about nothing yet," she said, after a little pause, with a sort of sob, speaking up to that kind face as if she had not spoken to a loving heart for a long, cruel time, and thus was starved for want of speech. "Every sort of effort seems too violent and strange. I hope aunt Lucy will not expect too much of me at first. I do not understand my own dullness. I have had to realize so much that many outside thoughts are an utter blank. I feel at times, when people talk to me about things they are seeing and hearing, and which I ought equally to see and hear, as if I were blind and deaf. Do you think this stupefaction will wear off naturally, Mr. Hazlehurst, or must I rouse myself and try to get rid

of it? I wish you would advise me just as if I were your own little girl. It hardly seems possible, you look so young; but I know that you have daughters almost my own age. Papa was so glad of that."

Dick had suddenly grown scarlet, and she released her hands from his with the reflection of his embarrassment on her own face.

"You take me for my oldest brother," he said, gravely. "I have had neither time nor thought to tell you that Thomas begged me to come here in his place, for he was unavoidably called to Philadelphia. Had I kept my senses about me, I should have told you at first, but—I pitied you so"—

"You really did know papa?" faltered Florence, in a trembling voice. "You were not merely pretending to be your brother?"

"Know your father? Of course I did. I knew you too, Miss Weir. I can perfectly well remember dining at your house in Gramercy Park; that you came in and danced on the table afterwards, even that you wore pretty gray kid boots!" cried Hazlehurst, so desperately in earnest to prove himself a veritable old friend that his vehemence made her smile a little.

She had sat down by the window and her chill little hands that he had warmed so tenderly in his own were crossed on her black lap. "I have lived in a great many places," she observed. "We left our home in Gramercy Park when I was little more than five. Now I am almost eighteen."

"I supposed you were considerably younger," rejoined Dick, also sitting down, but continuing to stare at her. He had enjoyed it more standing before her holding her hands. His own, indeed, had a curious feeling, as if they missed the clasp of lost treasure; but he resolutely put all nonsense from his mind, and attacked the practical part of his duties, having acquitted himself of his sentimental ones.

He inquired about her luggage, and made a memorandum concerning it. He showed her a time-table, and decided that she must eat a substantial lunch be-

fore setting out for the country. This little trip had suddenly assumed the proportions of an excursion into paradise, and when he finally undertook it the journey more than redeemed all his anticipations. They had lunch together. They had a drive together in a close carriage to the piers. They crossed the river together, and, as if the two had been sailing over distant seas into strange and storied kingdoms, the waters were blue around them, and on the sky overhead enchanted clouds floated across the luminous azure. Many a journey had Hazlehurst taken, in pursuit of careless pleasure, up and down the earth, with less delight than he now experienced in the few moments that he stood on the deck with Florence's hand drawn tight under his arm and the fresh wind in their faces. He seemed to be traveling into the wonders of a glorified world with this young girl. At his suggestion she had put aside that heavy veil of crape; the rough wind, chopping about, blew it across his eyes, and she looked up and laughed with the light laughter illuminating all her face. Oh, heavens! Clearly this must not be the end of his taking her about the world and finding every moment new pleasures.

His journey back was different. Such gloom could be brightened only by the prospect of seeing her again shortly. He did not like the looks of that grim Mrs. Wylie, and dreaded lest this terrible aunt should not be tender with his beautiful Florence. He remembered that his brother had said that the old lady had lost half of her little property by her brother's failure, and it was abominable to the young man to reflect upon the feminine spite which might sling its envenomed arrows at the innocent orphan. Here was he, young, rich, alone in the world; here was, too, a tender-hearted, beautiful creature alone in the world! Then he remembered what chill, fluttering birds her hands were until he took them in his own—But we must not disclose the feverish dreams of an ardent young man whose real warmth of feeling was suddenly aroused for the first time.

As soon as Thomas Hazlehurst returned to town he went out to see his ward, and came back enthusiastic over her beauty and doubtful about his wisdom in sending her to her aunt's.

"Mrs. Wylie has not the soul of an ant, to say nothing of an aunt," said he. "She has told the poor child over and over that her father defrauded her out of her fortune. Florence begged me to get her something to do at once. She says she can work; she minds little how hard she works if only she can be independent."

These words put Dick at fever heat. He was no philosopher, and it seemed to him the reverse of right that any one, particularly a young and beautiful woman, should have misfortune to endure. He hankered not only after happiness for himself, but happiness for the beautiful young woman as well. This hidden fire which consumed him had played small part in his engagement to Irene, and now, after the prose of a conventional betrothal, awoke to give him considerable trouble about Miss Weir. He thought of her so incessantly that the babble about unimportant matters which went on among the men and women he met was an interruption, and accordingly he dropped out of his place at the clubs and other social haunts. If he tried to read, by some singular fatality before he had reached the bottom of his first page a word or sentence was sure to strike the electric chain of association, and he would drop the book to go on thinking about her. Then when he slept, such dreams as visited him were not the visions to cool an awakened fancy; and when a young man becomes addicted to this sort of folly, it is well to make some earnest effort to get rid of these unprofitable painted bubbles of imagined reality, and to put substance in their place.

When Dick decided that it was of no use trying to endure this state of inaction any longer, he calmly went down and consulted Mr. Thomas Hazlehurst upon the propriety of his going into the country and offering himself to Florence that very afternoon.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated brother Tom. "You have hardly got over being engaged to Irene Van Voorst."

"Begging your pardon, the thing was over and done with two months ago."

"How many times have you seen Florence?"

"Five times, — no, seven times."

"Seven times? How many weeks has she been in this country?"

"Almost four weeks," said Richard, gravely.

"Well," remarked Thomas Hazlehurst dryly, "all that I can say is this: if you have come to such a pass that you go out to New Jersey to see a girl seven times in three weeks, you had better take the trip once more and conclude the matter. Besides, Mrs. Wylie is not the woman to allow such proceedings without some pointed feminine observations and decided opinions which might make Florence uncomfortable. I never approve of a man's paying such particular attentions that his intentions become a matter of remark before they are declared. As Miss Weir's guardian, sir," here he frowned majestically, "I must request you either to offer marriage or to withdraw at once."

Thomas Hazlehurst went back to his papers with a grim smile, and Dick at once set off to make his proposal, glad that whatever obstacles he need encounter lay behind the mystery of dark, wonderful eyes and the maddening sweetness of a smile frank as a waking child's. He arrived at Mrs. Wylie's house at a propitious moment; the old lady had set ceremoniously forth upon a round of visits, and Florence was alone. With the briefest possible prelude he enlightened her upon the object of his preceding errands, and acquainted her with the secret of his present quest. He was wildly in love, and in any intoxication one expects some little inspiration; he told his story well. His confession was absolute, and as interesting to Florence as such confessions may be when listened to with eyes drooping, ears thrilling, hearts beating.

"I think," she faltered, when after a time he grew silent and seemed to be

taking her answer for granted, "I think — I am afraid — it is too soon."

Dick laughed irrepressibly. "How much do you know about it?" he asked. "What is your usual habit under present circumstances?"

"But," cried Florence, "people wait a long time, usually, before — before — I am sure I have heard so," she added, lucidly.

"It seems to me," observed Dick, drawing her towards him, "that I have already waited a life-time;" and it was evident that no doubt existed in his own mind about their being engaged. He experienced a deep, soul-felt rapture as he looked into her exquisite face and met her rich, softly-withdrawing eyes.

This sort of engagement differed in some essentials from his former one. Irene was very piquant, very bewitching, but her blue eyes had never fallen helplessly beneath his, nor had her hands ever learned this trick of fluttering into his, like strayed birds back to their mother's wing. Irene had a dispassionate conviction regarding the uselessness of caresses in general, and an over-just sense of the absurdity of his kissing her in particular. Somehow, this bewildering charm of coy girlhood was as new to Hazlehurst as if he were twenty instead of twenty-eight. He knew nothing about Florence except that she was divinely fair and that he loved her irresistibly. Indeed, it is doubtful whether there was anything more subtle about her than the fact that she was preëminently beautiful and good, and that in loving she had the charm of giving her heart without reserve and becoming what love might make of her. She told her simple history, full of heart-breaks, and he poured out his own confessions impetuously, his handsome face flushed and excited in his new-found joy.

"I did not dream that you had been engaged before," murmured Florence, pensively. "Has it been over long?"

"Nine weeks," returned Dick, half laughing, half grave.

"Why was it over — Richard?"

Ah, such rare delight in hearing her pronounce his name with rising blushes!

"I could hardly make you understand, Florence. It was the aggregate result of a thousand accumulated troubles. We were never intended for each other, — in fact, the thing was broken off because a happy fate had you in store for me, my beautiful darling!"

"But what happened finally?" Florence coaxed.

Dick looked foolish. "She was embroidering," said he, a little embarrassed, "and asked my opinion about a leaf. I told her I hated those stiff pre-Raphaelite patterns, everything vertical and horizontal, without a natural feature to any flower. Then she quoted something at me out of a book, and I shrugged my shoulders. . . . After that she decided we were better apart. Her aunt was going to Europe the day following, and she joined the party."

"You could never have cared for each other," said Florence, gazing at him with a beautiful, tender smile. "I suppose you both had made a mistake. Fancy, now, *our* separating because you did not like my embroidery!"

This was delicious; yet Hazlehurst wished that he had not told Florence about his former love affair; not that he would have kept a thought of his heart a secret from her, but because this suggestion of Irene had descended upon his fresh rapture, his delicious repose of soul, startling him into uneasy reminiscences and alarming him with dim presentiment. Of late he had not thought of Irene at all, and why now, after parting in the tenderest manner from Florence, — why, I say, was Irene still the background of all his thoughts, while he exhausted his brain in mental arguments to sustain himself in his infidelity to his old engagement? This was the more curious because he had really, for the last few weeks, entirely forgotten Miss Van Voorst. He had sent off that sentimental little note from the club, and with it his final sigh of regret; the next morning he had met Florence, and life after that experience had been too engrossing to allow him useless memories. Why, then, at this climax of his joy, should the apparition of Irene suddenly arise?

He tried to rid himself of this pertacious spectre by dwelling upon the joys of a married future with Florence for his wife. Alas, the thought of the girl to whom he had but just plighted his troth became fainter and fainter, and instead of Florence it was Irene who usurped imperious sway over his dreams. It was the brilliant little creature to whom he had bade good-by nine weeks before who now seemed to stand beside him, calm, authoritative, witty, smiling as of old. When he reached his rooms on Thirty-Sixth Street, he was so taken possession of by her image that it was no surprise to encounter a note from her at once, although he supposed that she was in Paris. He read it, growing paler and paler, and then flung himself into a chair.

"By Jove!" said he, "I thought the devil was in it somehow!"

He sank into gloomy reverie, from which he emerged only when the clock struck half past five; he then started, picked up the note, and read it again.

DEAREST DICK, — It was such an absurd mistake for us to quarrel that as soon as I received your letter I set out for home. It seemed to me you would know that I was coming. I actually believed you would be waiting for me when the steamer came in. Of course that was fanciful and superstitious on my part. I hope you have not laid my nonsense to heart. You know quite well that all you so generously say I have been to you in the past you have been to me, and more. But we can talk the matter over at leisure. Sister begs that you will come around to dinner. If you reach here by six you will have a chance to see me alone.

IRENE.

Thursday, three P. M.
West Thirty-Fifth Street.

"What am I to do?" groaned Hazlehurst. It was by this time quarter to six. Whatever else he did, he must not let a girl sit three blocks off expecting him while he sulked at home deciding upon some sufficiently cold-blooded course of action. He was under the

shock of too overwhelming a surprise to feel dejection; all he experienced was a growing wonder how he should act in this emergency. His newly gained bliss was at that moment hardly blissful to him. With Irene's note lying in sight, and with the certainty of Irene, exquisitely dressed, waiting for him in the familiar place at her brother's house in the next street, the thought of Florence became legendary and dream-like. Physical inclination always yearns back towards the old familiar custom, and positively, when he had put on his dress clothes, taken his overcoat on his arm, and was turning around two Fifth Avenue corners, he was more occupied in thinking of Irene than of any woman on earth. She had a heart, after all, he was saying to himself; indeed, she must love him to distraction, or she would hardly have given up her European travel for him! When he reached the house he ran lightly up the once familiar steps and rang the bell; then, when Edward opened the door, said, "How are you, Edward? The ladies in the drawing-room yet?" And that functionary answered, "Mrs. Van Voorst is not down, sir, but Miss Irene is there," just in the old way. And almost before Edward was out of sight in his pantry, two little hands pounced upon Hazlehurst and drew him into the great dim parlors, and a little blonde head was pressed against a dinner waistcoat, and a broken little voice was murmuring, "Oh, forgive — forgive — dear old Dick — dear old darling — so unhappy — so glad — so wretched" —

And what response was Hazlehurst to make? He was the most chivalrous of men, and with a grain of chivalry about him what could he do but kiss her twice or thrice at every plea for forgiveness?

"Naughty boy!" said Irene, recovering herself. "As soon as I saw that letter dated from that wicked club, I knew that nothing would answer except my coming home to take care of you. Glad to see me?"

He kissed her again. There are times when kisses mean more than words; again, they may mean less.

"Confess that you needed me to keep you in order," she said, with a pouting, mutinous glance. Although not beautiful, she was a charmingly pretty creature. Then she always wore French dresses, her waist was narrow, her form delicious, and she took costume like a successful comedy actress. As for her face, it was bright, determined, imperious, shadowed by golden hair miraculously crimped and fluffed; her eyes were blue and sparkling, her nose saucy, and her lips coral in color and of a pretty, rebellious pattern. "You shall kiss me no more!" she declared magnificently. "I do not know where you learned such free and easy manners. Never from me, Dick, — never from me."

"You were never so bewitching before!" cried poor Hazlehurst, feeling the old half-sweet, half-torturing thralldom creeping over him.

"You are looking well, too," mused Irene, scanning him with a charming smile; "at least, as well as a man can look in a mustache. I noticed at my first glimpse of you that you had the air of a criminal." Dick laughed, as if he were amused. "I thought," she went on more softly, "that I could live without you, but we both found that we reckoned without knowing. Just as I was applauding myself for stoicism, your letter came. All my interest in Paris vanished like a dream. I felt a demon of jealousy gnawing at my heart" —

"You were jealous?" Dick ejaculated, aghast.

"Jealous of your club, of your amusements, and of all your distractions, you naughty boy! So I shot home like an arrow. And here I am, dreadfully ashamed of my foolish doings, but oh, so glad, — so awfully glad to see you."

"My dear, good little girl," gasped Dick.

Then, to put Hazlehurst on his guard against accepting her little bursts of temper as having any foundation, she unfolded to him the real story of their quarrel. The recital was long, and there were plenty of digressions, for she based every argument upon the incontestable fact of her loving him so well that his

indifference to many things she was interested in put her in a passion. "But you may be sure," she added, "that if I seem to hate you, it is only because I love you too much."

"I am not worthy of you!" said Dick.

"Bah! it's I who am not good enough for you, — that is, when you are at your best. I will confess to you that I suspect you of backsliding without me, but when I am in New York promise me that you will not go near that horrid club."

"With all my heart. A club is a mere *pis aller*. If women only knew how easily men at clubs learn to detest each other, they would soon cease talking against them. You all envy us our life; you think us butterflies, — we are mere grubs."

"That must come off," said Irene, with a gesture of her fairy hand towards his short upper lip.

"My mustache?" cried Hazlehurst, the instinct of self-preservation aroused. "Never. Am I to lose the only comfort I have had the last few weeks?" (Ah, Dick Hazlehurst, no wonder you blushed at that naughty asseveration.) "Have I endured that wretched time when I was afraid to look at my own reflection in the glass, but dreaded a thousand times more to meet any of the fellows abroad? It has taken fully two months to become the thing of beauty it is, and I intended it should be a joy forever. Confess you like it, Irene; you know it is becoming."

"It may be becoming," said Irene, tartly, "but I never like a mustache. Please, Dick, cut it off at once."

He bemoaned himself gently; he told her what a blessing this resource had been when he found himself at the end of his engagement, — something to live for.

She consoled and petted him. "I shall like you so much better without it. A man with a mustache is like a popinjay, or rather like a high-class ape. When I see one I think no more research is required for the connecting link between the races. Don't twirl the odious thing, Dick. If you care anything for me, Dick, you will cut it off at once."

Hazlehurst quailed; he always did quail before Irene. "All right," he returned, with a forced laugh. "All right, Irene. I may keep it on during dinner, may I not? Here comes Mrs. Van Voorst. How do you do, Mrs. Van Voorst? Got your invitation to dinner, and came around at once. I had no idea Irene was back again. Delightful surprise, is it not?"

Mrs. Van Voorst was a large woman, with a handsome face and figure, an abstracted look, and a sweet, drawling voice. "Yaas. I was startled out of my senses when I came in to lunch from shopping and found her here. Had she not returned, I suppose you would never have come near the house again, Mr. Hazlehurst."

"I give you my word," said Dick, "I have been coming more than twenty times, but I did not feel sure what was the correct thing to do when" —

"We did not throw you over, even if Irene was so foolish," drawled Mrs. Van Voorst. "Well, the key is found, the problem solved, is it?" she asked, turning her calm, large gaze from Irene to Dick, and from Dick to Irene.

"Oh, yes," returned Irene, decisively; "that nonsense is all over. It was only I who behaved badly. Dick was as good as gold. I wonder you wanted me back, Dick; you will have a dreadful wife unless I reform."

"I hate reformed people," said Dick, with a ghastly smile. "I like you very well now."

Then Van Voorst came in and greeted his future brother-in-law with hilarity, and they all went down to dinner. It was a good dinner. Van Voorst did that sort of thing as well as any man in New York, and while Hazlehurst ate and drank, a sort of sweetness and serenity stole over his tortured soul. Besides tumultuous emotions of pleasure, he had been called upon to experience a marring sense of doubt, embarrassment, and dread, but now he became conscious of a gradual evaporation of his doubts and dilemmas; halting indecision died the most natural of deaths with Irene just across the table, more charmingly

piquant than ever, telling him all the droll things that had happened to their party in Paris.

When they went up-stairs, the action was so natural that Hazlehurst gave it not a second's thought: he drew Irene into the little back parlor which had already seen three years of his love-making, and dropping down beside her on the crimson velvet sofa put his arm about her waist.

"No, Dick, you are not going to be sentimental," said Irene, promptly withdrawing to the other end of the sofa. "I was only too good-natured before dinner, and now you must behave yourself. Here have I been telling you everything I have done and seen and said and thought since we parted, yet not a word have you given me in return about your own occupations. I want to hear everything."

"Really, I don't know what I could tell you likely to interest you," answered Dick, stretching out his long legs with an easy air which successfully covered his guilty consciousness. "Evenings, particularly, I have had a dull time."

"Have you not paid visits?"

"No. Whom on earth did I want to see in New York?"

"Poor, darling Dick!"

He slid closer to her.

"Did you not go to the theatres?"

"Occasionally."

"To Wallack's and the Fifth Avenue and Union Square, I suppose?"

"Ye-es, — yes," said Dick.

"I hope you had none of those horrid late suppers afterwards?"

"Don't ask embarrassing questions, dear," replied Dick, blandly, "and then you will not embarrass me."

"But you might think of my wishes, Dick."

"You were — you were in Europe, Irene. The fact is, I did just what the other fellows did. I don't set up to be better than my neighbors, but on my soul I don't call myself worse. I tried staying home at first. I give you my word that for a week after our — after you went to Europe, I mean, I used to put on my slippers when I came in after

dinner, and pile about a hundred books on my table, and read and read until" —

"Until you fell asleep, I suspect, you dear old goose!"

"Precisely. It was dreary work. My own society palls upon me in the long run."

"What did you read?"

"Oh, I read part of Daniel Deronda. You know you were thoroughly vexed with me for putting it off so long; accordingly, I went through the first volume and began the second."

"Why did you not finish it?"

"I could n't stand Mordecai. I really could n't, you know. Does he die before the end of the book?"

"Yes."

"In that case I will finish it. I want to know what becomes of Gwendolen, — poor little Gwendolen! But Mordecai is a superfluity and a bore."

"Mordecai is a lofty-souled enthusiast."

"Just so. Well, I don't like lofty-souled enthusiasts. I feel sorry for anybody far gone in pulmonary consumption, but for all that if he tried to join our club we would blackball him remorselessly. So unpleasant for Deronda. I can't abide the fellow; still, I confess to a profound pity for any man in the clutches of such an ancient mariner, — holding him with his glittering eye and" —

"You don't like Deronda?" cried Irene, her face scarlet, her eyes like two flames.

"Of course I don't like Deronda. Do you?"

"Like him?" shrieked Irene. "I worship him! I would kiss the ground he trod on! He is my purest and loftiest ideal of a man."

Hazlehurst laughed bitterly. "I dare say. But I assure you your loftiest and purest ideal is a confounded prig."

"A prig!"

"A prig. What else is a prig save a man who sets up with fine, pragmatical discourse to be better than the rest of the world? Then, as if it were not enough to be a pragmatical prig, I hear he finally turns out to be a Jew. A

pragmatical prig with a long nose and a pronunciation resembling a man's with a cold in his head!"

Irene was white with wrath. "Daniel Deronda is a true, noble man," she said, glaring pale at Dick. "I do not wonder you men try to laugh at him," she went on, with withering scorn, "for you are all jealous of such traits; his grandeur dwarfs you into pigmies. Compared with you all, with your love of ease, your groveling standards, your petty vices, he is like a Greek god chiseled in purest marble."

"No doubt, — no doubt."

"He is like Guido's Archangel Michael, — such unruffled strength; such power without effort; such all-sustaining force, yet not a muscle strained."

"I give in."

"He is," pursued Irene, every word a lash, every glance a sword-thrust, "an ideal man; not the ideal of an imagination belittled by a knowledge of men as they are, but the ideal which is an impulse of a fresh, untried soul. One could kneel to such a man; one could adore him!"

"Could one marry him, Irene?"

"No!" retorted Irene, freezing; "he is not a sort of man with whom I could fall in love."

"Oh," said Dick, and smiled sweetly. "I yield, dearest; undoubtedly he is all you believe him to be. I yield to everything you say."

"'Tis n't enough for you to yield when I convince you. I want you to have an instinctive perception of the good, the true, the beautiful."

"I have an instinctive perception where a good, true, beautiful woman is concerned," said Dick, establishing himself very close to her. . . . "Come, now, there goes out the gas in the front parlor. I know that signal. I must be off."

He sprang up, and she followed him into the hall. "Edith tells me there will be a Philharmonic to-morrow afternoon," she observed, "and that they will practice some of *Götterdämmerung*. Come around to lunch, and we will go together. Edith has six tickets."

"Let me off from Wagner," implored Hazlehurst. "I'm not up to liking Wagner."

"Neither were you up to liking Beethoven," said Irene, icily, "until I made you go with me to Thomas's symphony concerts. I long since learned what your excuses for incompetence are,—an apology for indolence, and a disguise for indifference. What more interesting engagement have you for to-morrow?"

"None, I assure you,—none!" ejaculated Hazlehurst, eagerly. "What time is lunch? One o'clock? I will be here, and then for the music of the future." He kissed Miss Van Voorst. Then his hand fumbled in his overcoat pocket, but meeting her glance he withdrew it as if he had found a live scorpion there.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried, "have you been so foolish as to take up smoking again?"

"Only a cigar now and then," he pleaded. "That is nothing for a man."

"It is suicide! Every doctor who dares be candid declares that tobacco tends to deaden thought and perception, to paralyze all healthy intellectual action. I saw a difference in you the moment you came in,—a kind of absent-mindedness, and it was the result of that odious smoking. Promise me to give it up again."

"I promise," said Dick, in a spent voice. "There are the cigars,—six of 'em. Take 'em, keep 'em for me, dear. But, by Jove, if you want to make a saint of me, you must lay hold and shield me from temptation."

"Am I not trying to?" she asked, with irresistible sweetness, and lifting herself on her tiptoes she put up her lips to kiss him. "Take off that mustache," she said afterwards, "and come to-morrow at a quarter before one. Perhaps you had better read over *Götterdämmerung*, that you may be prepared to appreciate it."

When he was finally in the street, the door closed upon him, Hazlehurst drew a long breath. "By Jove!" said he, and jammed his hat down over his eyes; "by Jove!" and thrust his hands into his pockets. He stood irresolute. Should

he go to his club, or home to his rooms and face his trouble out? The longer he postponed his return to the grim spectre awaiting him at his fireside, the shorter his wrestle and vigil would be. A few games of cards or billiards would pass the time until he could, with any show of reason, seek his bed. But billiards did not amuse him, nor did five consecutive cigars promote mental paralysis, as Irene had predicted. It was twelve when he went home. Never had life seemed so insupportably dreary as when he entered his rooms, although his fire was in exquisite order, and his slippers and dressing-gown were warmed to a nicety. He sank into his easy-chair, and stared at the blazing coals for an hour without moving a muscle. Then, as the clock struck one, he rose with a sigh and drew off his boots, and was about to assume his slippers, when an overwhelming realization of his miserable dilemma struck him and roused him to pain like a red-hot iron.

"It seems," said he, bursting into impassioned, although inaudible soliloquy, "it seems like some farce, some damnable entanglement for gods and men to laugh over. Was ever a respectable man in such a position as mine? Poor, darling Florence, who trusted me so absolutely at four o'clock to-day!" As he thought of those quivering red lips, those dewy eyes raised to his, ungovernable pain and fury got the better of him, and he stamped about in his stocking-feet, conscious of nothing but misery.

"Who would have believed it?" he began again, after exhausting his energies, and, suddenly becoming aware of his unslipped feet, putting on the slippers which Irene's own white fingers had embroidered for him. "Why should I not have supposed Irene's decision was absolute? Was I to guess that she would melt at my foolish letter and come flying back to me? Could I have dreamed that any obstacle, the smallest impediment, lay in the way of my marrying another woman?" He gazed at the fire for twenty minutes in a state of utter mental chaos.

"How could I help loving Flossy?"

he asked himself. Then, a clear idea suddenly usurping supremacy, "I loved her, the first moment I saw her, as I never loved a woman before. If I could marry her!" he sighed, heavily. "Yet, how can I marry her?" Chaos reigned again.

"But Irene is a tramp," was the next defined thought which came to him in his extremity, "and in her way she is a devilish pretty woman, and not a girl in town can equal her for style. How clever she is!" A profound sigh. "I doubt if there are a dozen men on this continent who would not be overmatched by her in conversation. I always wondered at my good luck in getting engaged to her, for I can't hold a candle to her; yet she likes me, in spite of her cool airs and her affectations of prudery,—she likes me! I'm no coxcomb, but I'll be hanged if she is not right up and down fond of me."

A more genial look flitted across his features; he almost smiled at some delicious recollection, but caught himself at it, and pulling himself up in time he sighed again.

"What am I to do?" he asked, this time audibly, while he gazed defiantly at the fire. "What is to become of me? Both such devilish pretty girls, too!" he sighed, luxuriously. "They say," he reflected, after a season of vague and aimless reverie, "that no man ever got lost upon a straight road, but I would like to know whose crooked ways brought me here; not mine, I'll swear,—not mine." The clock struck three, obtrusively, and he glared at it angrily. "A man may be engaged to two women," mused Hazlehurst, feeling unmistakably the wear and tear of his day and evening, "without coming to grief, perhaps, but he can't safely marry two women. I have got to end the matter on one side or the other; which shall it be? I think I see myself telling Irene that she has taken too much for granted in coming back! Poor little Irene! she is the proudest woman alive; it would be base, unmanly, brutal, to deceive her. She measures my constancy by her own,—good, single-hearted little girl,—never guess-

ing that the moment she left me I took advantage of my freedom by falling impetuously in love with another and a very different woman. She thinks me unstable as water now; what would she think if she knew all!" He questioned that inward monitor whose monitions had failed to keep him faithful, but with little result.

"I would die before I let her know how I have betrayed her trust," he said to himself, bringing down his hands on the arm of his chair. "She has the best right to me, no doubt. She has liked me ever since she was a little girl, God bless her." The tears rushed to his eyes; he covered his face with his hands, a picture of utter wretchedness.

"But how can I enlighten Florence?" he went on, goaded by his fatal extremity. "Can I, a being who pretends to walk upright upon the earth instead of crawling,—can I tell a young, gentle, beautiful girl, unused to the world, ignorant of all possibility of mistake, that I won her first pure, fond kisses under a false pretense? that I— By Jove, no,—I could no more do it than I could thrust a knife into her warm white throat."

He rose to his feet and flung up his arms. "I shall go mad," he told himself, "unless I end this. Yet I must sleep."

He put aside irresolution, argument, and the necessity for decision for the present, and prepared for bed. It is easy to doff habiliments worn by day, and assume those congenial to unbending and repose; it is easy to put out one's light and create a darkness which seems thick enough to hide all the troubles of the world; it is easy to put one's head upon a pillow, even to close one's eyes; and these are to most moderately fortunate people the sure preliminaries of peaceful and blameless slumber. But when Hazlehurst's head was on his pillow, his firelight screened, his gas turned out, his mental vision became only the more keen. His horizons widened, and instead of seeing only himself and his individual interests, with mere vague and conjectural results for others unhappily connected with him, the full con-

sequences of his predicament glared in upon him. When the clock struck five, there emerged from the bedroom, into the firelighted dusk of his sitting-room, a wrapped and slippered figure. He drew a match and flashed the light across his gas-jet, which flamed high and burned with a roar. He went to his writing-desk, and without a moment's indecision snipped off two equal slips of paper from a blank sheet; he wrote a single word on each, put them on the table face downwards, and turned them around with his eyes fast shut. Then, reversing his position, he extended his hand behind him, drew one of the papers, and read the name. While he looked at it his face wore a look of poignant anguish. The meaning of these occult proceedings was that he had cast lots to see whether he should give up Florence or Irene. The name he had drawn had been Florence. She was to be the modern Iphigenia sacrificed that Irene's fortunate winds might blow.

II.

Hazlehurst rose that morning at eight, with a belief that he had not once closed his eyes, but had he been closely questioned his reminiscences of the hour preceding and succeeding dawn would have been of the faintest. It is a fact that no man ever lay awake all night without feeling proud of his achievement, and Dick experienced a melancholy pleasure in measuring the tortures of the ordeal he had passed through. He was faint and worn out, and, since his trial by lot, had succumbed from his mental struggle. Florence was to be given up, but the details of his coming explanation to her he had not yet grappled with. He trusted a good deal to her intuitions, for a woman's intuitions are proverbially known to be more incisive and unerring than man's reason. The moment he spoke, her swift feminine divination would supply his meaning, just as the chorus of a Greek tragedy fills up the deficiencies of the lofty dialogue. Such convictions of the ease with which the troublesome affair was to be concluded inspired re-

lief, and he had not yet thought of the part his own infatuation would play in the coming interview. The fact was that after yesterday's excitements his capacity for feeling was for the moment exhausted: what he called his stoicism was merely the result of his enfeebled powers.

Before nine o'clock he was in the street; twenty minutes later he was in a stage well down Broadway, on his way to take the 9.15 train into the country. All his friends who caught a glimpse of him asked each other to whose funeral Hazlehurst was going, he had such a woe-begone face. He sat on the east side of the stage, pale, rigid, his lifeless eyes fixed on vacancy. Now and then a sort of spasm crossed his features, as a dumb longing tugged at his consciousness, but in general he felt nothing but icy calm, and realized to the full the imperativeness of the motives which urged him towards the girl he loved, to undo the sweet promises of yesterday.

Suddenly, however, as he neared Ninth Street, the color flamed to his temples, his eyes lighted up, he smiled exultingly; and pulling the check he rushed from the omnibus, and before the horses had fairly stopped he was on the curb-stone, his eager hands grasping a little hand in a black kid glove, and his eyes gazing into the dark splendors of the eyes that blinded him to everything else on earth. Resolutions, scruples, dreads, these were gone, —

"Gone like the winds that blew
A thousand years ago."

To look into this girl's face and resolve in cold blood to renounce her! Nobody could renounce her unless he was a stock, a stone.

"Was ever anything so lucky?" he was saying. "I was just on my way to you."

"So early?" she asked, archly. "I thought you might be out on the train which brought you yesterday." Here he pressed the hand he held, and she blushed deeper than ever. "I am going back at that time, and it occurred to me that it would be no end of a surprise for you to find me on the boat."

"I prefer this. What are you doing now?"

"I am shopping for aunt Lucy. I was just about to cross to Stewart's."

Was ever an experience so novel and delicious as this taking her across the crowded thoroughfare, which she encountered bravely enough clinging to his arm? How beautiful she was! She was glowing as only eighteen years can glow; her heavy crapes threw out the more clearly her pure, well-cut features, the whiteness of her skin, the redness of her lips, and the richness of her low-braided hair. Nothing and nobody could help loving her. The very ruff about her milky throat seemed to lie there tenderly, even worshipingly. As Hazlehurst followed her from counter to counter, he gazed at her with silent rapture. He answered her little appeals to his judgment and good taste with an easy decision which was habitual to him with her, because she believed in him so devoutly. There was a subtle consciousness behind all these half-finished questions and answers which made up their conversation, these glances from eyes to eyes, these tremors and changes of color, that rendered this low prose of small shopping a rare phase of highly poetic intercourse.

Hazlehurst dismissed self-questionings. All his thoughts, all his contrivances, were to enjoy the fleeting morning hours. If his consciousness did once or twice revert to his dilemma, he told himself that whatever happened he could never give up Florence. Come what might, this sweet and shy divinity must be his; he loved her more dearly every moment, and their joy in each other was like that of two fond children who had strayed apart, but now had met once more, and felt the rapture of clasping longing hands again. Any inward debate to which Hazlehurst listened for a moment was about the feasibility of dropping his engagement to accompany Irene to the rehearsal, and after he had telegraphed to her that unavoidable business called him out of town for the day he abandoned himself wholly to the pleasure of the moment. The circumstances

through which he was passing with Florence had occurred to him before, but with a difference, and showed him while he was with her that no other love could be permissible to him. Susceptibilities, which aroused hitherto had merely made him hesitate before action, now, instead of passive insight, became prime movers of passionate action and supreme result. In quality and breadth his love for her was like the unforeseen inheritance of a fortune, which put everything, hitherto unattainable, within his reach. Come what might, he swore for the hundredth time he would never resign Florence, nor this wild tumult of fancies which simultaneously soothed him with the sweetest hopes and stung him with longing.

He took her home, of course, but by six o'clock he was again at his chambers in town. While with Florence he had been in the highest spirits; there had been an interval of violent happiness when he had sat alone with the young girl at her aunt's and placed a diamond ring on her finger, whispering that it was soon to be followed by a prettier ring yet,—the prettiest ring in the world,—a wedding-ring! His joy had been the fiercer, perhaps, because he knew that he would have to suffer for it. There was no doubt about his present suffering; his only uncertainty was whether any bliss would not be over-dearly bought by such tortures.

Yet supreme agony is not always incompatible with a nice regard for appearances, and as Hazlehurst was going out to dinner he bestowed some pains upon the adjustment of his necktie and chose his gloves with discrimination. He had promised twenty-four hours before to make one of a small dinner-party at Mrs. Van Voorst's, and to go afterwards with the rest of the company to a gay wedding and reception, and he not once thought of faltering before the performance of his duty. He had no dread of meeting Irene under these circumstances; he was almost too wretched to dread anything, and in a roomful of people would have every motive for self-control. Thus kept up to the mark, he believed that in intercourse with Miss Van Voorst,

let him but have his senses about him, some loop-hole of explanation and escape must occur to him. Then, too, she was a shrewd little woman of the world, and feminine intuitions must work their traditional miracles.

"I used to suppose," he mused as he went out, "that a sort of chasm, which nothing but a tremendous fall could bridge over, divided an honorable man from a scamp. I see, now, there is a gradual descent of shallow but slippery stairs." He could never, he argued, have taken a step deliberately which should give him pleasure, but cause suffering to any woman alive; yet here he was entangled by circumstances which, unless he soon extricated himself from them, proved him to be a coward and a traitor. He was not a man to be coerced by events even into wrong thinking. Self-accusation was the worst form of accusation for him, and he could have borne hard trouble better than this sickening, vitiating sense of remorse for the part he seemed to be playing, in spite of his own good intentions.

"Irene must be told," he said to himself as he went on to the dinner-party. "By Jove, I must not be what Hamlet tells about, 'a pipe for Fortune's finger to sound what stop she please.'" This morsel of Shakespearean wisdom pleased him so well that he repeated this statement of his succinct resolve not to be played on any more some half dozen times before he rang Van Voorst's door-bell.

There were already eight people in the room; hence Irene merely put up her gold eyeglass when he came in, nodded, and extended a tiny gloved hand. Hazlehurst bowed over it, and crossed to the fire-place, against which he leaned for the next fifteen minutes without vouchsafing a word after his greetings. He looked haughty and impassive, as it is easy enough for a tall man with good legs, broad shoulders, and a mustache to look, but he was merely absorbed in watching Irene, who sat opposite, at her ease, with her usual air of supremacy exacting a tribute of completer admiration than any woman present. Florence

was more beautiful, and the gems lost in Irene's blonde hair would flash along the dusky braids of her rival like stars along the midnight sky; but for all that, something about Irene was in its way peerless. She was always a centre, imperious, yet with an irresistible archness; with an exquisite relish, a delicate appreciation, of every nice social point; she shone and sparkled as few women ever can. Tonight she was in a ravishing toilette of *ciel* blue velvet and silk; there was a sort of electrical life and inspiration in her eyes and smile, and the very flutter of her fan; her careless little gestures had a positively magnetic effect upon Hazlehurst. He admired her easy caprice, her brilliance, her audacity; yet, trying to be faithful to some one, -- not to have an utterly faithless heart, -- he asked pardon, mentally, of Florence for allowing her sumptuous young beauty to be even momentarily effaced in his memory by the presence of this gay, sunny-haired Irene in her laces, velvets, and jewels. His face wore a look of struggle, and Miss Van Voorst was not slow to perceive it. She was at the helm of conversation, as usual, but was not too much engrossed to look at him twice or thrice with questioning gravity, and she finally went over and whispered to her sister-in-law.

"You are to take Irene out, please," drawled Mrs. Van Voorst in Dick's ear, a moment afterwards; and Dick, nothing loath, went over to Irene and offered her his arm.

"Luckier than I expected," he muttered. "I feared it might be a duty night for me."

"It ought to have been," said Irene, scanning him closely, "but you poor, dear fellow, you look ill, and I decided to let you have a good time. I had a terrible scolding ready for your not taking me to the Philharmonic! To tell the candid truth, I did not altogether believe in your telegram. Did you really go out of town?"

"I really did," answered Dick, flushing to his hair. "Awfully sorry about the Philharmonic."

"What ails you?" demanded Irene,

raising her keen blue eyes to his face. "You change color every moment, and your eyes have an unnatural brightness. I am afraid you are going to be ill."

"If I could only tell," thought the wretched man to himself; then he said aloud, "I have a confounded headache."

"The effect of that horrid tobacco," said Irene, tartly. "How many cigars have you smoked to-day?"

"Not one!" retorted Hazlehurst, triumphantly. "I have not touched a cigar since last night."

"You smoked five then, sir! I heard about you. Had you gone straight home and to bed you would have no headache to-night."

"Who told you about me?" cried Dick, furious with the babbler. "I did not suppose" —

"*Tout doucement.*" "I was nothing. Nobody meant to tell tales; but do you fancy, sir, I do not listen eagerly to anything I may hear about you?" and as they went down the staircase she looked up to him with the sweetest smile and the dearest little blush in the world.

Hazlehurst beamed and pressed her hand gently against his waistcoat. What less could he do under the circumstances? He must act his part to-night, he told himself, let what would come afterwards. He put by exaggerated fears, and with Irene to help him on fairly shone at dinner. His very dejection seemed to be *le fagot de son esprit*. But afterwards, thrown with Irene at the reception, he upbraided himself for his course towards her. Once or twice the confession was actually on his lips; then his heart failed him. He thus lost a half hour of golden opportunity, as they loitered in a dim conservatory together. Although one has a tongue and muscles to move it, even words at command, articulation is sometimes so difficult.

"You seem to be always beginning a sentence," said Irene, incisive as usual, "then turning it into something else. I believe there is something you want to say to me."

"There is, Irene," responded Dick, with a sudden and powerful tremor.

"You always understand me; you seem to divine my most hidden thoughts."

He wished within his heart that she only would.

"My intuitions may be good for something when once aroused," she answered with some diffidence, "but I cannot undertake to penetrate the secrets of a man's heart. So tell me; you make me curious."

Hazlehurst looked at her with a wildly beating heart, his face crimson.

"Irene," he began, "Irene" . . . He leaned persuasively down towards her ear.

"There is nothing so real in the world as love between man and woman, is there?" he asked, feeling that by grasping generalities firmly he could more easily reduce them to particulars.

She gave him a charming glance. "So I thought, Dick, when I rushed back to you from Paris."

"Oh, Lord," thought Hazlehurst, "I don't believe a word about women's being brighter than men."

He answered her smile with a wavering, hysterical one.

"A man ought to marry a woman he really loves," said he in a melancholy tone. "You women know little about the scrapes we get into first and last."

"We know nothing about them," cried Irene fiercely, "because we despise the apologetic ingenuity of men in laying their misdeeds upon their" —

"You — you don't understand me," gasped Hazlehurst. "Suppose I — suppose a fellow — suppose now" —

"Suppose what?" demanded Irene, with flashing eyes. "Whenever I hear of men's predicaments I think of Horace Walpole's saying, 'There is no use in warning a man of folly if you do not cure him of being foolish.'"

"That is a very clever saying," observed Hazlehurst, with a just air.

"But what were you going to tell me? I really believe you had something vital to communicate," said Irene, looking at him with suspicious conjecture, and evidently regarding his postponed revelations as not to his advantage. There was by this time a melancholy absence

of anything like resolve in Hazlehurst's mind concerning the necessity of confession. His present anxiety was merely to bridge over this emergency and allay surmise, for against the shafts of Irene's freely expressed opinions and the clear, straight glances of her blue eyes he was powerless.

"I was thinking," said he boldly, "about Brooke and what a lucky fellow he is to-night. He was not engaged until long after we were, yet here he is married and happy as a king. Why people who love each other should put off the consummation of their engagement is more than I can understand. Why?"—

"Don't scold me any more!" cried Irene, whose face had grown every instant more and more scarlet. "If that is what you are trying to say, say it frankly. I am not altogether so silly as I used to be."

Dick's heart almost ceased to beat. He looked at her until she withdrew her eyes in consuming embarrassment.

"We will talk about this to-morrow, Irene," said he gently, forcing himself to speak by a horrible effort. He felt sick body and soul, but he went on talking kindly to the girl at his side, who thought he wanted to hasten their marriage. Once or twice something in his tone struck her as unaccustomed, and she asked if his head ached. Yes, he told her, it ached abominably.

III.

The next morning Hazlehurst was worn out. He no longer believed in any possible peaceful solution; he yearned for some appalling retribution. He felt sick and was determined to be sick, and only got out of bed to write two notes, which he dispatched to the letter-box by the woman who brought his breakfast. One of these communications was answered in three hours by a note, a parcel of books, and three small phials containing white pellets; they were of course from Miss Van Voorst, and her words ran thus:—

MY DEAR RICHARD, — I knew that you were sick last night, for you were in many ways so unlike yourself. There is no doubt but that you have an influenza cold coming on, and I send you the proper medicine. If there is a feeling like a tight band about your head, take belladonna and mercurias alternately every two hours, as the labels give directions. If your headache is a dull one, just between the eyes, alternate mercurias with the pulsatilla. Naturally, as soon as you are well enough you will come over here, and we will take care of you. It goes without saying that you are not to smoke, nor to touch wine or to drink coffee, while you are taking these remedies. I send you these books. I observed last night, at dinner, that you were not well read up on the Eastern Question, and this is a good time for you to post yourself. I have a busy day before me, but be sure that wherever I am I shall think of my poor, dear, suffering Dick.

IRENE.

Irene's influence, thus directly exerted, ruled Hazlehurst so imperiously all that day that his only thought of Florence was one of poignant sadness, as of some exquisite possession irremediably lost. The following morning, however, a fresh force, nicely adjusted to certain requirements of his soul, caused Miss Van Voorst's image first to grow pale, then faint, finally to vanish for a time at least. In short, a note came from Florence. Perhaps there was rarely in the annals of love a *billet-doux* more cold and stiff, more prolix over unimportant details and cursory as to essentials; nevertheless it inspired its recipient with a wild joy. It was so delicious to Hazlehurst that she could not gather courage to address him by his Christian name, that she should bungle over the smallest allusion to their mutual understanding, that she should sign herself primly, "Yours," and nothing more. The unwontedness in love-making she disclosed so unconsciously in her maidenly shame at the first stirrings of an imperious sentiment made him prize her scanty revelations of her pretty tumults of mind

with a full recognition of their worth. He was about to answer her letter; then, as he sat wrapped in his dressing-gown before the fire, smoking his well-colored meerschaum and reading a novel of Balzac's, it occurred to him that he might be better employed in completing his convalescence by a short trip into the country. Instead of writing these rankling little speeches he was meditating, he might make them to her with his own lips, watching the light in her eyes, the wavering flushes on her cheeks, and the laughter dimpling about her mouth as he scolded her for all the little enormities of omission and commission which he had discovered in her note. He forgot that he had decided to keep himself *hors du combat* until his feelings had time to cool; he forgot that he was sick; the temptation was too irresistible. Of course his conscience thundered at him; but what is conscience against inclination?—particularly when we can argue that in following the bent of our inclinations we are acting upon principle. The duty of an engaged man is to show tender devotion towards his *fiancée*. Hazlehurst was engaged,—very much engaged, as we have seen; hence, urged by duty, he put aside his slippered ease, shaved, dressed, and went out. Never had he felt more eager, more alert. It was a pleasure merely to be in the streets again, after his imprisonment. He was going into the country to see Florence, and he felt that true lover's longing to carry a gift to his beloved. She had confessed to him, with adorable simplicity, when he put the engagement ring on her finger, that she had the most foolish taste for ornament, and that she had always striven against it as a weakness. Hazlehurst thought such a weakness natural to a woman, and delicious to a man if he were but able to gratify it. He had considerable knowledge of jewels, and particularly fancied a certain kind of dog-collar necklace which would, he knew, admirably set off the long lithe whiteness of that beautiful throat. He passed from the street into a great jeweler's establishment and made his wants known, and was obligingly confronted with every ex-

pensive style of feminine adornment. He had bought jewels before, yet never with such necessity for critical nicety in selection: the thing must be elegant, but not over-superb; it must be at once beautiful, chaste, and sufficiently subdued in tone to suit mourning habiliments.

"Pearls," mused he, thoughtfully, "pearls and black enamel. Yes, pearls and black enamel are just what I want."

"Pearls and black enamel?" murmured a voice in his ear. "I cannot wear pearls and black enamel!"

He turned, growing pale to his lips. It was as if a spectre had suddenly confronted him, yet it was only Miss Van Voorst, exquisitely dressed, who had approached from the corner of the store, where Mrs. Van Voorst was having the screw of her watch tightened. They had both seen him come in, and had now advanced upon him unawares. Irene looked at first mischievously, then puzzled. Mrs. Van Voorst restrained her conjectures behind her usual air of passivity. Hazlehurst was a picture of detected guilt, and the man behind the counter displayed curiosity and interest. Hazlehurst's face had stiffened so that the muscles about his mouth seemed of the rigidity of ice, but he managed to go through some form of greeting, and gave Irene a look which aroused her sympathy and made her act for him.

"How pretty these are!" said she, turning the necklaces over. "Are you buying one, and may we help you in your choice?" She looked up in his face kindly and reassuringly, and gave his hand a little pressure as he clasped hers for an instant. "Are you better to-day?" she asked him, soberly.

"A little better," muttered the wretched man.

"Buying a necklace?" said Mrs. Van Voorst. "That is in our line, but not in yours, and you must take our advice. It ought to be for a lady in mourning," she added, fastening her dreamy eyes on Dick, "for I heard you say it must be of pearls and black enamel."

He nodded. "This is pretty," continued Mrs. Van Voorst, entering into the spirit of the affair, for she was never

so happy as when she was buying something. "Don't you think this the prettiest, Irene?"

"I like that better," returned Irene. "I advise you to take it," she added, with a queer little smile at Dick, who met it with a look of supreme torture.

"Shall I have it sent, sir?" asked the clerk, who felt an event in the air, but could not quite find the key to it.

Hazlehurst nodded again.

"While you are giving him the address," said Irene, with gracious tact, "Edith and I will go upstairs and look at some vases. We have a wedding present to buy, and if you have leisure you will find us looking at the porcelain." The ladies swept on, leaving the young man alone with his necklace.

"What address, sir?" inquired the clerk.

"Miss Van Voorst, West Thirty-Fifth Street," answered Hazlehurst, after one moment of miserable hesitation. He paid his bill, then went up and joined Irene, who was expatiating eloquently upon the beauty of some specimens of *Limoges faience*. Now it is easier to find powers of articulation upon the subject of pottery than that of jewels, when the destination of the jewels may be predicted with infallible accuracy to be some young and pretty woman, but what particular young and pretty woman is unknown; accordingly Dick once more found his tongue. But he had, of course, to contend with embarrassment, and to struggle against the melancholy embitterment which possessed him. He knew himself not to be in the most honorable position in the world, but the deeper he found himself involved in duplicity the more necessary it seemed to him that he should acquit himself satisfactorily before the world; so he talked volubly about *faience*, which was one of Irene's hobbies. That he should bungle and forget the marks and the dates was only to be expected, for, as Miss Van Voorst remarked, with her pretty scorn, he always bungled and forgot marks and dates, and could never perceive any appreciable difference between pottery and porcelain. After the *Limoges* vases were chosen, Hazlehurst

took the vacant seat in the carriage, and went with the ladies to look at some new pictures, then to lunch with Mrs. Van Voorst's mother in Washington Square, and finally to a kettle-drum. It was all customary, facile, agreeable, but his one little torch went out, and all his brightness was spent. He was sore at heart. Irene's careless affection stung him with shame; her every look inspired poisoned regret. He could not tell what he wanted, nor which way his inclination turned; any chord will twang after too much tension. He could think with pleasure neither of Irene nor of Florence. His only joy was in despising himself.

When his social duties were over and he had accompanied the ladies home, he stopped a few moments in the fire-light with Irene.

"I am going with cousin Rebecca's party to Wallack's to-night," she said. "They have a box; I do not know which one, but you had better drop in."

He kept a constrained silence.

"Have you another engagement, Dick?"

"No, Irene, no other engagement to-night."

"Come, then."

"Perhaps I will, dear."

His tone of voice melted her whole soul. "Richard," she said, clinging to him, "tell me what ails you. Whatever it may be, I can help you to bear it. No matter if it hurts me, no matter if it lowers you in my sight; I have faith and belief in you, and to spare. I often am sharp and harsh with you, but at my heart there is no coldness; you must feel that, Dick."

If he could have spoken before, it was no longer possible for him to use the gross barbarity of answering her tenderness with his miserable explanation. He remained silent, she all the time looking into his face with her strong clear gaze. She was incapable of suspicious interpretation or coarse misrepresentation of his silence, and the penitential misery of his look touched her indescribably.

"Tell me one thing, Dick," she said quietly; "tell me if my sudden return has led you into any complications,—if

you are making any mistake out of consideration for me."

"I can tell you nothing, Irene!" he cried, hastily. "Nothing to-night, at least. I dare say nothing, I dare do nothing, until my proper course of action is clear to me. But I must declare this: that I never in all my life have loved you as I love you at this moment. I never before began to appreciate you. You are an angel, and I am unworthy to touch even the hem of your garment." He kissed her passionately, removed her hands from his arm, — for she would have detained him, — and went out.

After another twenty-four hours of wretchedness, the solution of Hazlehurst's dilemma was hastened by the receipt of a note from Irene: —

DEAR RICHARD, — I want you to come over quietly at half past eight and spend the evening with me. Edith will take Philip to a concert, and we can be quite alone. I am wiser about you than I was last evening, and think that I can promise you a prospect of pleasanter days than you have spent since my return.

IRENE.

He set out before eight, for the moments crept in his suspense, but when he reached the door and placed his hand upon the knob his heart failed him. Three times he went up the steps, then descended, and passed and repassed the house. It was, however, but little after the appointed time when he was admitted and ushered into the presence of Irene. She was waiting for him, with a calm, grave face, and received him kindly. There was a softness about her which would once have filled him with delight; now it merely inspired compunctions.

"I received your note," he said, looking at her with a pale face as he took her hand.

"So I conclude," she returned, answering his gaze without the ghost of a smile.

"May I kiss you, Irene?" he asked. She half laughed. "I really think you had better not, Dick," she replied,

and, drawing her fingers from his, she went over and sat upon her favorite sofa. He continued to stand before the fire. "I found that necklace when I went to my room last evening," she went on calmly. "It was very good in you to send it, and perhaps it was ungrateful for me not to keep it; but I preferred that it should arrive safely at its proper destination, so I took it over to-day."

He went towards her swiftly. "What do you mean, Irene?"

She smiled her old mutinous smile. "I confess," said she, "that I was not fairly honest about the matter. I gave it to Miss Weir as a wedding present from myself. I told her you and I were old friends, — *old and dear friends*, Dick, — that I had a warm and tender interest in the girl who was to make your happiness, so ventured to bring her a trifle which should remind you both of Irene Van Voorst."

Hazlehurst caught her hand. "You torture me, Irene!" said he, in a hoarse, strained voice. "You know everything, and knowing everything you must despise me."

"Well, no, Dick, I don't despise you. When once I understood, I was not so dull as I had been" —

"How did you find out?" he asked, still in the extremity of anguish.

"I went down and questioned Mr. Thomas Hazlehurst," she replied, coolly. "Afterwards, I went over to call upon his ward and your promised wife."

"Believe me, Irene, when she gave me that promise, I had no more idea that you were coming back to me than that an angel out of heaven was to descend into my arms."

"I fully recognize my mistake," she said, flushing scarlet. "I thought your letter meant more than it did. I rushed back, presumptuous in my belief that I could open our book just at the page where I had turned down the leaf and closed it two months before. I did not dream how much deeper you would have read, — that a new heaven and a new earth had been revealed, that I was no longer all the world to you."

"I was faithful at first; I really was."

"Yes, until you fell in love, Dick."

He groaned.

"I was not philosophical at once," she went on, her tone a little clearer, her effort in speaking more evident. "I had my moment of bitterness, but after I had seen that lovely young girl, the most beautiful creature I ever met" — He gazed at her with a sudden change of color. She was conscious of a new gleam in his eyes, and broke off. It was not his fault, perhaps, that he thus opened to her instantaneously a vista of the higher hopes, the more ardent aspirations, which this new love of his had brought to him; that she thus tardily recognized in his face the effective magic of a real passion. He loved Florence with transport; he had never loved her in this way, and Irene was heavy at heart. But she put by her trouble, and went on. "She is not only beautiful, Dick," she said, generously, "but she is good. Her face is like an antique; then, too, she has a warm, loving, girlish heart."

"Is she not beautiful? Is she not good?" cried Hazlehurst. "I swear to you, Irene, that after I met her I was no longer master of myself."

Irene smiled another of her pathetic little smiles. "She told me how good you had been to her from the first. She was shy with me to begin with, because she knew that you and I were once more than friends, Dick; but after I had told her that it was over, absolutely over, she took pleasure in being frank with me, for, poor child, she had had no friend to confide in."

The tears rushed to Hazlehurst's eyes; he paced violently up and down the room a moment, then flung himself on his knees before Irene, took her hand, and kissed it as a Catholic kisses a relic of his saint.

"If you knew all, Irene," said he, "you would know that I have struggled — that my actions" —

"That your actions got ahead of your intentions, as usual," she retorted, laugh-

ing. But Hazlehurst did not laugh.

"I have heard Florence's side of the story," said she, kindly; "now tell me yours."

He was but too ready to tell it. He had gathered feeling as she went on, until now he experienced this chance of disburdening himself of his emotion as a relief. He poured out his confession unchecked: his love for Florence, his joy in winning her; then his rebound of feeling, his yielding to the satisfyingness of his old easy customs of intercourse with Irene. Words which he could hardly have spoken except under passionate stress of feeling rushed freely to his lips, and the girl who listened, with a smiling face but a sickening heart, knew every moment more clearly that she was to bear her life henceforth robbed of its sweetest conditions.

"I told Florence," she observed, when finally he paused, "that you would be with her early to-morrow, Dick, and you must keep the promise I made, for she has missed you. If, as you seem to think, you have anything to be grateful for, you may easily requite the debt. I wish you would never, either now or in any of the coming years you will spend together, let her know that — that — that there has been any mistake between you and me about our relations the past few days. It would be kind to neither of us to make the disclosure to her; she has a tender heart which could easily be wounded, and I — I am a foolishly proud woman, Dick."

"I feel the most ungrateful fellow alive, as if — as if" — Hazlehurst gazed into her face, distractedly. "You are the best and sweetest girl in the world, Irene."

"Except one."

"I except none. I adore Florence, I love her madly, — but you — but you, Irene, had you kept me, you might have made the better man of me."

She smiled skeptically, and shook her head. Still, in her heart she believed him.

E. W. Olney.

MOONSHINE.

A BURLETTA IN ONE ACT.

SCENE. — An old-fashioned country-house near the sea-shore: a lawn in front, shut off from the road by a hedge of lilac bushes. Azalea-trees in tubs, pot-plants, etc. Miss MABEL seated on the lower steps of the piazza, indolently swinging her chip hat by the ribbons. In the middle distance is seen a small railway station of Gothic architecture, over which a thin strip of silvery smoke from a passing train still lingers. On the left, glimpses of the ocean through the apple boughs. Eight o'clock in the evening and broad moonlight.

Miss MABEL suddenly rouses from her listless attitude.

MABEL.

Who goes there by the lilac trees,
Whistling as if "for want of thought"?

EDWARD.

Your cynic, madame, if you please,
Your Romeo — if you'd rather not.

MABEL, laughing.

Oh, wherefore art thou Romeo?

EDWARD, softly closing the gate behind him.

I'm not, unless you wish it so.

MABEL.

I don't. Be serious, Ned. Sit here,
And listen to me.

EDWARD, with a furtive glance at the parlor windows.

Yes, my dear.

MABEL.

Don't call me dear; I'll not allow it.

EDWARD.

But then you *are*; you must avow it.

MABEL.

Don't speak so; I don't think it nice.

EDWARD.

But I meant — dear at any price.

MABEL, graciously.

That's different, Ned. I've no objection
To anything but your affection.

EDWARD.

You have it, Mabel.

MABEL.

Have it? What?

EDWARD.

Why, anything, of course, but that.

MABEL.

You got my note?

EDWARD.

Be sure I did.

Jemima brought it, — faithful maid, —
And I flew straightway here, as bid,
Leaving a carom match half played.
Prim little note! Each curlycue,
Each pause and dash, was full of you;
As if your own sweet breath had blown
The words to me by telephone!

MABEL.

Ned, I 'm so happy —

EDWARD.

So am I —

MABEL.

So happy; can you fancy why?

EDWARD.

Being with me.

MABEL.

That 's understood.

But guess.

EDWARD, looking around.

Your father —

MABEL.

Gone!

EDWARD.

For good?

MABEL.

For several days. As we sat down
To tea, a message came from town, —
Something about the savings-banks.
Papa was really quite low-hearted;
He says it's owing all to Hayes.

EDWARD.

There 's no ill wind but some one thanks!

MABEL.

And, after supper, he departed.

EDWARD.

May Heaven increase his length of days!

MABEL.

In town?

EDWARD.

Precisely. Let him stay
From now until the first of May, —
To-day's the fifteenth! What a year
We two could have together here!
Fancy, what horseback rides at dawn!

MABEL.

What croquet parties on the lawn!

EDWARD.

What wanderings by the solemn sea!

MABEL.

What airs from Mignon after tea!

EDWARD.

What happy noons, I at your feet,
"Close latticed from the brooding heat"!

MABEL.

What picnics in the woodlands! What —

EDWARD.

Extensive cruises in my yacht!

MABEL.

And when the autumn evenings came —

EDWARD.

We'd watch the blue curl of the flame
In the wide chimney.

MABEL, thoughtfully.

Yes, but look:
The butcher's and the grocer's book,
The coachman John, the gardener Joe,
Jemima's wages, oh, oh, oh!

EDWARD.

Nothing more simple: in the fall
Mortgage the house and pay them all.

MABEL.

Papa'd like that!

EDWARD.

If he liked me,
Mabel, this very dream might be!
Ah, but we could be happy then.
He hates me!

MABEL, sentimentally.

Yes, hates all young men.
Not you as *you*, I think, but all —

The rich, the poor, the short, the tall,
The light, the dark — impartially.

EDWARD.

An abolitionist! — I see
He's ready to abolish me!
If I drop in at night, by chance,
Above his Evening Post he stares,
Watching my every turn and glance;
If I but brush your dress, he glares!
We go to ride, *he* goes to ride;
You sit outside, *he* sits outside.
Alert, suspicious, never quiet,
He treats me just as if I were
Some hungry South Sea Islander
Upon a nice-young-woman diet.
By Jove, since fathers first began,
(Invention of a fallen race!)
I think there never was a man
So wholly out of time and place,
So crotchety and full of whim —

MABEL.

Hush, Ned! I'm all the world to him, —
Wife, son, and daughter.

EDWARD.

That may be;
You're also all the world to me!

MABEL.

He had me first, Ned.

EDWARD.

Nonsense, stuff!
Well, then, he's had you long enough.

MABEL.

Sometime, perhaps, he'll think so too.
Meanwhile, see what's befallen you!
For three whole days, if life endures, —
Papa being absent still, — I'm yours.
Come, let us plan what we shall do.

EDWARD.

Do? Why, like Dr. Watts's bee,
Improve each shining hour, *D. V.*
For instance, since we hold our fate
In our own hands, we'll sit up late
Here in the moonlight.

MABEL.

That's agreed.
This is a shining hour indeed!
Hand me my cloud, please, — over there.

(He assists her in arranging the cloud.)

Thanks. No, not *that* way! Mind,—my hair!
Now for to-morrow, Ned. Proceed.

EDWARD.

To-morrow, at the rise of sun,
Two saddle-horses; lunch at one;
Mozart and poetry; at four,
John with the carriage at the door;
Home in the sunset; tea at seven;
Mabel and moonlight till eleven.

MABEL.

What for next day?

EDWARD.

Oh, just the same.

MABEL.

And Friday?

EDWARD.

Ditto.

MABEL.

But how tame!

A hop, a concert, something joyous, —
Charades?

EDWARD, leaning back against the step luxuriously.

'T would really but annoy us.

Why should I ask for company,

When you are all the world to me?

MABEL, suddenly.

Listen! I thought I heard a noise. . . .

It is — but no, it could not be.

Good heavens — papa! *Is* that his voice?

EDWARD, rising hastily.

The voice is certainly papa's!

MABEL.

He must have dropped from out the stars!

EDWARD.

More probably from out the cars!

MABEL.

We're lost! Oh, Edward, 't was all your —

EDWARD, bitterly.

I sent for me? Oh, to be sure!

MABEL.

But if it had not been for you,

Would I have sent Jemima?

EDWARD, with confusion.

True!

PATERFAMILIAS, in linen duster, with large family umbrella and small traveling-bag, on which his monogram glares in gold thread, appears at the gate.

MABEL.

Quick! through the garden, down the lane! —

(Excitedly.)

Papa, what's happened?

PATERFAMILIAS.

Missed the train!

Who's that just left here? Oh, young Brown?

The rascal thought I'd gone to town.

I got a message, . . . bank all right.

(Looking after Edward.)

Hullo! I say! young Brown! — *good night!*

Curtain.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

THE EUROPEANS.

IV.

A FEW days after the Baroness Münster had presented herself to her American kinsfolk she came, with her brother, and took up her abode in that small white house adjacent to Mr. Wentworth's own dwelling of which mention has already been made. It was on going with his daughters to return her visit that Mr. Wentworth placed this comfortable cottage at her service; the offer being the result of a domestic colloquy, diffused through the ensuing twenty-four hours, in the course of which the two foreign visitors were discussed and analyzed with a great deal of earnestness and subtlety. The discussion went forward, as I say, in the family circle; but that circle on the evening following Madame Münster's return to town, as on many other occasions, included Robert Acton and his pretty sister. If you had been present, it would probably not have seemed to you that the advent of these brilliant strangers was treated as an exhilarating occurrence, a pleasure the more in this tranquil household, a pro-

spective source of entertainment. This was not Mr. Wentworth's way of treating any human occurrence. The sudden irruption into the well-ordered consciousness of the Wentworths of an element not allowed for in its scheme of usual obligations required a readjustment of that sense of responsibility which constituted its principal furniture. To consider an event, crudely and baldly, in the light of the pleasure it might bring them was an intellectual exercise with which Felix Young's American cousins were almost wholly unacquainted, and which they scarcely supposed to be largely pursued in any section of human society. The arrival of Felix and his sister was a satisfaction, but it was a singularly joyless and inelastic satisfaction. It was an extension of duty, of the exercise of the more recondite virtues; but neither Mr. Wentworth, nor Charlotte, nor Mr. Brand, who, among these excellent people, was a great promoter of reflection and aspiration, frankly advertised to it as an extension of enjoyment. This function was ultimately assumed by Gertrude Wentworth, who was a pe-

cular girl, but the full compass of whose peculiarities had not been exhibited before they very ingeniously found their pretext in the presence of these possibly too agreeable foreigners. But Gertrude had to struggle with a great accumulation of obstructions, both of the subjective, as the metaphysicians say, and of the objective order; and indeed it is no small part of the purpose of this little history to set forth her struggle. What seemed paramount in this abrupt enlargement of Mr. Wentworth's sympathies and those of his daughters was an extension of the field of possible mistakes; and the doctrine, as it may almost be called, of the oppressive gravity of mistakes was one of the most cherished traditions of the Wentworth family.

"I don't believe she wants to come and stay in this house," said Gertrude; Madame Münster, from this time forward, receiving no other designation than the personal pronoun. Charlotte and Gertrude acquired considerable facility in addressing her, directly, as "Eugenia;" but in speaking of her to each other they never called her anything but "she."

"Doesn't she think it good enough for her?" cried little Lizzie Acton, who was always asking unpractical questions that required, in strictness, no answer, and to which indeed she expected no other answer than such as she herself invariably furnished in a small, innocent-satirical laugh.

"She certainly expressed a willingness to come," said Mr. Wentworth.

"That was only politeness," Gertrude rejoined.

"Yes, she is very polite, — very polite," said Mr. Wentworth.

"She is too polite," his son declared, in a softly growling tone which was habitual to him, but which was an indication of nothing worse than a vaguely humorous intention. "It is very embarrassing."

"That is more than can be said of you, sir," said Lizzie Acton, with her little laugh.

"Well, I don't mean to encourage her," Clifford went on.

"I'm sure I don't care if you do!" cried Lizzie.

"She will not think of you, Clifford," said Gertrude, gravely.

"I hope not!" Clifford exclaimed.

"She will think of Robert," Gertrude continued, in the same tone.

Robert Acton began to blush; but there was no occasion for it, for every one was looking at Gertrude, — every one, at least, save Lizzie, who, with her pretty head on one side, contemplated her brother.

"Why do you attribute motives, Gertrude?" asked Mr. Wentworth.

"I don't attribute motives, father," said Gertrude. "I only say she will think of Robert; and she will!"

"Gertrude judges by herself!" Acton exclaimed, laughing. "Don't you, Gertrude? Of course the baroness will think of me. She will think of me from morning till night."

"She will be very comfortable here," said Charlotte, with something of a housewife's pride. "She can have the large northeast room. And the French bedstead," Charlotte added, with a constant sense of the lady's foreignness.

"She will not like it," said Gertrude; "not even if you pin little tidies all over the chairs."

"Why not, dear?" asked Charlotte, perceiving a touch of irony here, but not resenting it.

Gertrude had left her chair; she was walking about the room; her stiff silk dress, which she had put on in honor of the baroness, made a sound upon the carpet. "I don't know," she replied. "She will want something more — more private."

"If she wants to be private she can stay in her room," Lizzie Acton remarked.

Gertrude paused in her walk, looking at her. "That would not be pleasant," she answered. "She wants privacy and pleasure together."

Robert Acton began to laugh again. "My dear cousin, what a picture!"

Charlotte had fixed her serious eyes upon her sister; she wondered whence she had suddenly derived these strange

notions. Mr. Wentworth also observed his younger daughter.

"I don't know what her manner of life may have been," he said, "but she certainly never can have enjoyed a more refined and salubrious home."

Gertrude stood there looking at them all. "She's the wife of a prince," she said.

"We are all princes here," said Mr. Wentworth; "and I don't know of any palace in this neighborhood that is to let."

"Cousin William," Robert Acton interposed, "do you want to do something handsome? Make them a present, for three months, of the little house over the way."

"You are very generous with other people's things!" cried his sister.

"Robert is very generous with his own things," Mr. Wentworth observed dispassionately, and looking, in cold meditation, at his kinsman.

"Gertrude," Lizzie went on, "I had an idea you were so fond of your new cousin."

"Which new cousin?" asked Gertrude.

"I don't mean the baroness!" the young girl rejoined, with her laugh. "I thought you expected to see so much of him."

"Of Felix? I hope to see a great deal of him," said Gertrude, simply.

"Then why do you want to keep him out of the house?"

Gertrude looked at Lizzie Acton, and then looked away.

"Should you want me to live in the house with you, Lizzie?" asked Clifford.

"I hope you never will. I hate you!" Such was this young lady's reply.

"Father," said Gertrude, stopping before Mr. Wentworth and smiling, with a smile the sweeter, as her smile always was, for its rarity, "do let them live in the little house over the way. It will be lovely!"

Robert Acton had been watching her. "Gertrude is right," he said. "Gertrude is the cleverest girl in the world. If I might take the liberty, I should certainly recommend their living there."

"There is nothing there so pretty as the northeast room," Charlotte urged.

"She'll make it pretty. Leave her alone!" Acton exclaimed.

Gertrude, at his compliment, blushed and looked at him; it was as if some one less familiar had complimented her. "I am sure she will make it pretty. It will be very interesting. It will be a place to go to. It will be a foreign house."

"Are we very sure that we need a foreign house?" Mr. Wentworth inquired.

"Do you think it desirable to establish a foreign house—in this quiet place?"

"You speak," said Acton, laughing, "as if it were a question of the poor baroness opening a wine-shop or a gaming-table."

"It would be too lovely!" Gertrude declared again, laying her hand on the back of her father's chair.

"That she should open a gaming-table?" Charlotte asked, with great gravity.

Gertrude looked at her a moment, and then, "Yes, Charlotte," she said, simply.

"Gertrude is growing pert," Clifford Wentworth observed, with his humorous young growl. "That comes of associating with foreigners."

Mr. Wentworth looked up at his daughter, who was standing beside him; he drew her gently forward. "You must be careful," he said. "You must keep watch. Indeed, we must all be careful. This is a great change; we are to be exposed to peculiar influences. I don't say they are bad; I don't judge them in advance. But they may perhaps make it necessary that we should exercise a great deal of wisdom and self-control. It will be a different tone."

Gertrude was silent a moment, in deference to her father's speech; then she spoke in a manner that was not in the least an answer to it. "I want to see how they will live. I am sure they will have different hours. She will do all kinds of little things differently. When we go over there it will be like going to Europe. She will have a boudoir. She will invite us to dinner,—late. She will breakfast in her room."

Charlotte gazed at her sister again. Gertrude's imagination seemed to her to be fairly running riot. She had always known that Gertrude had a great deal of imagination,—she had been very proud of it. But at the same time she had always felt that it was a dangerous and irresponsible faculty; and now, to her sense, for the moment it seemed to threaten to make her sister a strange person who should come in suddenly, as from a journey, talking of the peculiar and possibly unpleasant things she had observed. Charlotte's imagination took no journeys whatever; she kept it, as it were, in her pocket, with the other furniture of this receptacle,—a thimble, a little box of peppermint, and a morsel of court-plaster. "I don't believe she would have any dinner,—or any breakfast," said Miss Wentworth. "I don't believe she knows how to do anything herself. I should have to get her servants, and she would n't like them."

"She has a maid," said Gertrude; "a French maid. She mentioned her."

"I wonder if the maid has a little fluted cap and red slippers," said Lizzie Acton. "There was a French maid in that play that Robert took me to see. She had pink stockings; she was very wicked."

"She was a *soubrette*," Gertrude announced, who had never seen a play in her life. "They call that a *soubrette*. It will be a great chance to learn French." Charlotte gave a little soft, helpless groan. She had a vision of a wicked, theatrical person, clad in pink stockings and red shoes, and speaking, with confounding volubility, an incomprehensible tongue, flitting through the sacred penetralia of that large, clean house. "That is one reason in favor of their coming here," Gertrude went on. "But we can make Eugenia speak French to us, and Felix. I mean to begin—the next time."

Mr. Wentworth had kept her standing near him, and he gave her his earnest, thin, unresponsive glance again. "I want you to make me a promise, Gertrude," he said.

"What is it?" she asked, smiling.

"Not to get excited. Not to allow

these—these occurrences to be an occasion for excitement."

She looked down at him a moment, and then she shook her head. "I don't think I can promise that, father. I am excited already."

Mr. Wentworth was silent a while; they all were silent, as if in recognition of something audacious and portentous.

"I think they had better go to the other house," said Charlotte, quietly.

"I shall keep them in the other house," Mr. Wentworth subjoined, more pregnantly.

Gertrude turned away; then she looked across at Robert Acton. Her cousin Robert was a great friend of hers; she often looked at him, this way, instead of saying things. Her glance on this occasion, however, struck him as a substitute for a larger volume of diffident utterance than usual, inviting him to observe, among other things, the inefficiency of her father's design—if design it was—for diminishing, in the interest of quiet nerves, their occasions of contact with their foreign relatives. But Acton immediately complimented Mr. Wentworth upon his liberality. "That's a very nice thing to do," he said, "giving them the little house. You will have treated them handsomely, and, whatever happens, you will be glad of it." Mr. Wentworth was liberal, and he knew he was liberal. It gave him pleasure to know it, to feel it, to see it recorded; and this pleasure is the only palpable form of self-indulgence with which the narrator of these incidents will be able to charge him.

"A three days' visit at most, over there, is all I should have found possible," Madame Münster remarked to her brother, after they had taken possession of the little white house. "It would have been too *intime*,—decidedly too *intime*. Breakfast, dinner, and tea *en famille*,—it would have been the end of the world if I could have reached the third day." And she made the same observation to her maid Augustine, an intelligent person, who enjoyed a liberal share of her confidence. Felix declared that he would willingly spend his life in the bosom of

the Wentworth family; that they were the kindest, simplest, most amiable people in the world, and that he had taken a prodigious fancy to them all. The baroness quite agreed with him that they were simple and kind; they were thoroughly nice people, and she liked them extremely. The girls were perfect ladies; it was impossible to be more of a lady than Charlotte Wentworth, in spite of her little village air. "But as for thinking them the best company in the world," said the baroness, "that is another thing; and as for wishing to live *porte à porte* with them, I should as soon think of wishing myself back in the convent again, to wear a bombazine apron and sleep in a dormitory." And yet the baroness was in high good humor; she had been very much pleased. With her lively perception and her refined imagination, she was capable of enjoying anything that was characteristic, anything that was good of its kind. The Wentworth household seemed to her very perfect in its kind, — wonderfully peaceful and unspotted; pervaded by a sort of dove-colored freshness that had all the quietude and benevolence of what she deemed to be Quakerism, and yet seemed to be founded upon a degree of material abundance for which, in certain matters of detail, one might have looked in vain at the frugal little court of Silberstadt-Schreckenstein. She perceived immediately that her American relatives thought and talked very little about money; and this of itself made an impression upon Eugenia's imagination. She perceived at the same time that if Charlotte or Gertrude should ask their father for a very considerable sum he would at once place it in their hands; and this made a still greater impression. The greatest impression of all, perhaps, was made by another rapid induction. The baroness had an immediate conviction that Robert Acton would put his hand into his pocket every day in the week if that rattle-pated little sister of his should bid him. The men in this country, said the baroness, are evidently very obliging. Her declaration that she was looking for rest and retirement had been

by no means wholly untrue; nothing that the baroness said was wholly untrue. It is but fair to add, perhaps, that nothing that she said was wholly true. She wrote to a friend in Germany that it was a return to nature; it was like drinking new milk, and she was very fond of new milk. She said to herself, of course, that it would be a little dull; but there can be no better proof of her good spirits than the fact that she thought she should not mind its being a little dull. It seemed to her, when from the piazza of her eleemosynary cottage she looked out over the soundless fields, the stony pastures, the clear-faced ponds, the rugged little orchards, that she had never been in the midst of so peculiarly intense a stillness; it was almost a delicate sensual pleasure. It was all very good, very innocent and safe, and out of it something good must come. Augustine, indeed, who had an unbounded faith in her mistress's wisdom and far-sightedness, was a great deal perplexed and depressed. She was always ready to take her cue when she understood it; but she liked to understand it, and on this occasion comprehension failed. What, indeed, was the baroness doing *dans cette galère*? what fish did she expect to land out of these very stagnant waters? The game was evidently a deep one. Augustine could trust her, but the sense of walking in the dark betrayed itself in the physiognomy of this spare, sober, fallow, middle-aged person, who had nothing in common with Gertrude Wentworth's conception of a *soubrette*, by the most ironical scowl that had ever rested upon the unpretending symbols of the peace and plenty of the Wentworths. Fortunately, Augustine could quench skepticism in action. She quite agreed with her mistress — or rather she quite outstripped her mistress — in thinking that the little white house was pitifully bare. "Il faudra," said Augustine, "lui faire un peu de toilette." And she began to hang up *portières* in the doorways; to place wax candles, procured after some research, in unexpected situations; to dispose anomalous draperies over the arms of sofas and the backs of chairs. The baroness had brought

with her to the New World a copious provision of the element of costume; and the two Miss Wentworths, when they came over to see her, were somewhat bewildered by the obtrusive distribution of her wardrobe. There were India shawls suspended, curtain-wise, in the parlor door, and curious fabrics, corresponding to Gertrude's metaphysical vision of an opera-cloak, tumbled about in the sitting-places. There were pink silk blinds in the windows, by which the room was strangely bedimmed; and above the chimney-piece was disposed a remarkable band of velvet, covered with coarse, dirty-looking lace. "I have been making myself a little comfortable," said the baroness, much to the confusion of Charlotte, who had been on the point of proposing to come and help her put her superfluous draperies away. But what Charlotte mistook for an almost culpably delayed subsidence Gertrude very presently perceived to be the most ingenious, the most interesting, the most romantic intention. "What is life, indeed, without curtains?" she secretly asked herself; and she appeared to herself to have been leading hitherto an existence singularly garish and totally devoid of festoons.

Felix was not a young man who troubled himself greatly about anything,—least of all about the conditions of enjoyment. His faculty of enjoyment was so large, so unconsciously eager, that it may be said of it that it had a permanent advance upon embarrassment and sorrow. His sentient faculty was intrinsically joyous, and novelty and change were in themselves a delight to him. As they had come to him with a great deal of frequency, his life had been more agreeable than appeared. Never was a nature more perfectly fortunate. It was not a restless, apprehensive, ambitious spirit, running a race with the tyranny of fate, but a temper so unsuspicious as to put Adversity off her guard, dodging and evading her with the easy, natural motion of a wind-shifted flower. Felix extracted entertainment from all things, and all his faculties—his imagination, his intelligence, his affections, his senses

—had a hand in the game. It seemed to him that Eugenia and he had been very well treated; there was something absolutely touching in that combination of paternal liberality and social consideration which marked Mr. Wentworth's deportment. It was most uncommonly kind of him, for instance, to have given them a house. Felix was positively amused at having a house of his own; for the little white cottage among the apple-trees—the chalet, as Madame Münster always called it—was much more sensibly his own than any domiciliary *quatrième*, looking upon a court, with the rent overdue. Felix had spent a good deal of his life in looking into courts, with a perhaps slightly tattered pair of elbows resting upon the ledge of a high-perched window, and the thin smoke of a cigarette rising into an atmosphere in which street-cries died away and the vibration of chimes from ancient belfries became sensible. He had never known anything so infinitely rural as these New England fields; and he took a great fancy to all their pastoral roughnesses. He had never had a greater sense of easy *bien-être*; and at the risk of making him seem a rather sordid adventurer I must declare that he found an irresistible charm in the fact that he might dine every day at his uncle's. The charm was irresistible, however, because his fancy flung a rosy light over this homely privilege. He appreciated highly the fare that was set before him. There was a kind of fresh-looking abundance about it which made him think that people must have lived so in the mythological era, when they spread their tables upon the grass, replenished them from cornucopias, and had no particular need of kitchen stores. But the great thing that Felix enjoyed was having found a family,—sitting in the midst of gentle, generous people whom he might call by their first names. He had never known anything more charming than the attention they paid to what he said. It was like a large sheet of clean, fine-grained drawing-paper, all ready to be washed over with effective splashes of water-color. He had never had any cousins, and he had never

before found himself in contact so unrestricted with young unmarried ladies. He was extremely fond of the society of ladies, and it was new to him that it might be enjoyed in just this manner. At first he hardly knew what to make of his state of mind. It seemed to him that he was in love, indiscriminately, with three girls at once. He saw that Lizzie Acton was more brilliantly pretty than Charlotte and Gertrude; but this was scarcely a superiority. His pleasure came from something they had in common, — a part of which was, indeed, that physical delicacy which seemed to make it proper that they should always dress in thin materials and clear colors. But they were delicate in other ways, and it was most agreeable to him to feel that these latter delicacies were appreciable by contact, as it were. He had known, fortunately, many virtuous gentlewomen, but it now appeared to him that in his relations with them (especially when they were unmarried) he had been looking at pictures under glass. He perceived at present what a nuisance the glass had been, — how it perverted and interfered, how it caught the reflection of other objects and kept you walking from side to side. He had no need to ask himself whether Charlotte and Gertrude, and Lizzie Acton, were in the right light; they were always in the right light. He liked everything about them: he was, for instance, not at all above liking the fact that they had very slender feet and high insteps. He liked their pretty noses; he liked their surprised eyes and their hesitating, not at all positive way of speaking; he liked so much knowing that he was perfectly at liberty to be alone for hours, anywhere, with either of them that preference for one to the other, as a companion of solitude, remained a minor affair. Charlotte Wentworth's sweetly severe features were as agreeable as Lizzie Acton's wonderfully expressive blue eyes; and Gertrude's air of being always ready to walk about and listen was as charming as anything else, especially as she walked very gracefully. After a while Felix began to distinguish; but even then he would often wish, sud-

denly, that they were not all so sad. Even Lizzie Acton, in spite of her fine little chatter and laughter, appeared sad. Even Clifford Wentworth, who had extreme youth in his favor, and kept a buggy with enormous wheels and a little sorrel mare with the prettiest legs in the world, — even this fortunate lad was apt to have an averted, uncomfortable glance, and to edge away from you at times, in the manner of a person with a bad conscience. The only person in the circle with no sense of oppression of any kind was, to Felix's perception, Robert Acton.

It might perhaps have been feared that after the completion of those graceful domiciliary embellishments which have been mentioned Madame Münster would have found herself confronted with alarming possibilities of *ennui*. But as yet she had not taken the alarm. The baroness was a restless soul, and she projected her restlessness, as it may be said, into any situation that lay before her. Up to a certain point her restlessness might be counted upon to entertain her. She was always expecting something to happen, and, until it was disappointed, expectancy itself was a delicate pleasure. What the baroness expected just now it would take some ingenuity to set forth; it is enough that while she looked about her she found something to occupy her imagination. She assured herself that she was enchanted with her new relatives; she professed to herself that, like her brother, she felt it a sacred satisfaction to have found a family. It is certain that she enjoyed to the utmost the gentleness of her kinsfolk's deference. She had, first and last, received a great deal of admiration, and her experience of well-turned compliments was very considerable; but she knew that she had never been so real a power, never counted for so much, as now when, for the first time, the standard of comparison of her little circle was a prey to vagueness. The sense, indeed, that the good people about her had, as regards her remarkable self, no standard of comparison at all gave her a feeling of almost illimitable power. It

was true, as she said to herself, that if for this reason they would be able to discover nothing against her, so they would perhaps neglect to perceive some of her superior points; but she always wound up her reflections by declaring that she would take care of that.

Charlotte and Gertrude were in some perplexity between their desire to show all proper attention to Madame Münster and their fear of being importunate. The little house in the orchard had hitherto been occupied during the summer months by intimate friends of the family, or by poor relations, who found in Mr. Wentworth a landlord attentive to repairs and oblivious of quarter-day. Under these circumstances the open door of the small house and that of the large one, facing each other across their homely gardens, levied no tax upon hourly visits. But the Misses Wentworth received an impression that Eugenia was no friend to the primitive custom of "dropping in;" she evidently had no idea of living without a door-keeper. "One goes into your house as into an inn,—except that there are no servants rushing forward," she said to Charlotte. And she added that that was very charming. Gertrude explained to her sister that she meant just the reverse; she did n't like it at all. Charlotte inquired why she should tell an untruth, and Gertrude answered that there was probably some very good reason for it which they should discover when they knew her better. "There can surely be no good reason for telling an untruth," said Charlotte. "I hope she does n't think so."

They had of course desired, from the first, to do everything in the way of helping her to arrange herself. It had seemed to Charlotte that there would be a great many things to talk about; but the baroness was apparently inclined to talk about nothing.

"Write her a note, asking her leave to come and see her. I think that is what she will like," said Gertrude.

"Why should I give her the trouble of answering me?" Charlotte asked. "She will have to write a note and send it over."

"I don't think she will take any trouble," said Gertrude, profoundly.

"What then will she do?"

"That is what I am curious to see," said Gertrude, leaving her sister with an impression that her curiosity was morbid.

They went to see the baroness without preliminary correspondence; and in the little *salon* which she had already created, with its becoming light and its festoons, they found Robert Acton.

Eugenia was intensely gracious, but she accused them of neglecting her cruelly. "You see Mr. Acton has had to take pity upon me," she said. "My brother goes off sketching, for hours; I can never depend upon him. So I was to send Mr. Acton to beg you to come and give me the benefit of your wisdom."

Gertrude looked at her sister. She wanted to say, "That is what she would have done." Charlotte said that they hoped the baroness would always come and dine with them; it would give them so much pleasure; and, in that case, she would spare herself the trouble of having a cook.

"Ah, but I must have a cook!" cried the baroness. "An old negress in a yellow turban. I have set my heart upon that. I want to look out of my window and see her sitting there on the grass, against the background of those crooked, dusky little apple-trees, pulling the husks off a lapful of Indian corn. That will be local color, you know. There is n't much of it here, — you don't mind my saying that, do you? — so one must make the most of what one can get. I shall be most happy to dine with you whenever you will let me; but I want to be able to ask you sometimes. And I want to be able to ask Mr. Acton," added the baroness.

"You must come and ask me at home," said Acton. "You must come and see me; you must dine with me first. I want to show you my place; I want to introduce you to my mother." He called again upon Madame Münster, two days later. He was constantly at the other house; he used to walk across the fields from his own place, and he appeared to

have fewer scruples than his cousins with regard to dropping in. On this occasion he found that Mr. Brand had come to pay his respects to the charming stranger; but after Acton's arrival the young theologian said nothing. He sat in his chair with his two hands clasped, fixing upon his hostess a grave, fascinated stare. The baroness talked to Robert Acton, but, as she talked, she turned and smiled at Mr. Brand, who never took his eyes off her. The two men walked away together; they were going to Mr. Wentworth's. Mr. Brand still said nothing; but after they had passed into Mr. Wentworth's garden he stopped and looked back for some time at the little white house. Then, looking at his companion, with his head bent a little to one side and his eyes somewhat contracted, "Now I suppose that's what is called conversation," he said; "real conversation."

"It's what I call a very clever woman," said Acton, laughing.

"It is most interesting," Mr. Brand continued. "I only wish she would speak French; it would seem more in keeping. It must be quite the style that we have heard about, that we have read about,—the style of conversation of Madame de Staël, of Madame Récamier."

Acton also looked at Madame Münster's residence among its hollyhocks and apple-trees. "What I should like to know," he said, smiling, "is just what has brought Madame Récamier to live in that place!"

V.

Mr. Wentworth, with his cane and his gloves in his hand, went every afternoon to call upon his niece. A couple of hours later she came over to the great house to tea. She had let the proposal that she should regularly dine there fall to the ground; she was in the enjoyment of whatever satisfaction was to be derived from the spectacle of an old negress in a crimson turban shelling peas under the apple-trees. Charlotte, who had provided the ancient negress, thought it must be a strange household, Eugenia

having told her that Augustine managed everything, the ancient negress included,—Augustine, who was naturally devoid of all acquaintance with the English tongue. By far the most immoral sentiment which I shall have occasion to attribute to Charlotte Wentworth was a certain emotion of disappointment at finding that, in spite of these irregular conditions, the domestic arrangements at the small house were apparently not—from Eugenia's peculiar point of view—strikingly offensive. The baroness found it amusing to go to tea. She dressed as if for dinner. The tea-table offered an anomalous and picturesque repast; and on leaving it they all sat and talked in the large piazza, or wandered about the garden in the starlight, with their ears full of those sounds of strange insects which, though they are supposed to be, all over the world, a part of the magic of summer nights, seemed to the baroness to have, beneath these western skies, an incomparable resonance.

Mr. Wentworth, though, as I say, he went punctiliously to call upon her, was not able to feel that he was getting used to his niece. It taxed his imagination to believe that she was really his half-sister's child. His sister was a figure of his early years; she had been only twenty when she went abroad, never to return, making in foreign parts a willful and undesirable marriage. His aunt, Mrs. Whiteside, who had taken her to Europe for the benefit of the tour, gave, on her return, so lamentable an account of Mr. Adolphus Young, to whom the headstrong girl had united her destiny, that it operated as a chill upon family feeling,—especially in the case of the half-brothers. Catherine had done nothing subsequently to propitiate her family; she had not even written to them in a way that indicated a lucid appreciation of their suspended sympathy; so that it had become a tradition in Boston circles that the highest charity, as regards this young lady, was to think it well to forget her, and to abstain from conjecture as to the extent to which her aberrations were reproduced in her descendants. Over these young people—

a vague report of their existence had come to his ears — Mr. Wentworth had not, in the course of years, allowed his imagination to hover. It had plenty of occupation nearer home, and though he had many cares upon his conscience the idea that he had been an unnatural uncle was, very properly, never among the number. Now that his nephew and niece had come before him, he perceived that they were the fruit of influences and circumstances very different from those under which his own familiar progeny had reached a vaguely-qualified maturity. He felt no provocation to say that these influences had been exerted for evil; but he was sometimes afraid that he should not be able to like his distinguished, delicate, lady-like niece. He was paralyzed and bewildered by her foreignness. She spoke, somehow, a different language. There was something strange in her words. He had a feeling that another man, in his place, would accommodate himself to her tone; would ask her questions and joke with her, reply to those pleasantries of her own which sometimes seemed startling as addressed to an uncle. But Mr. Wentworth could not do these things. He could not even bring himself to attempt to measure her position in the world. She was the wife of a foreign nobleman who desired to repudiate her. This had a singular sound, but the old man felt himself destitute of the materials for a judgment. It seemed to him that he ought to find them in his own experience, as a man of the world and an almost public character; but they were not there, and he was ashamed to confess to himself — much more to reveal to Eugenia by interrogations possibly too innocent — the unfurnished condition of this repository.

It appeared to him that he could get much nearer, as he would have said, to his nephew; though he was not sure that Felix was altogether safe. He was so bright and handsome and talkative that it was impossible not to think well of him; and yet it seemed as if there were something almost impudent, almost vicious, — or as if there ought to be, — in a young man being at once so joyous and so posi-

tive. It was to be observed that while Felix was not at all a serious young man there was somehow more of him — he had more weight and volume and resonance — than a number of young men who were distinctly serious. While Mr. Wentworth meditated upon this anomaly his nephew was admiring him unrestrictedly. He thought him a most delicate, generous, high-toned old gentleman, with a very handsome head, of the ascetic type, which he promised himself the profit of sketching. Felix was far from having made a secret of the fact that he wielded the paint-brush, and it was not his own fault if it failed to be generally understood that he was prepared to execute the most striking likenesses on the most reasonable terms. "He is an artist, — my cousin is an artist," said Gertrude; and she offered this information to every one who would receive it. She offered it to herself, as it were, by way of admonition and reminder; she repeated to herself at odd moments, in lonely places, that Felix was invested with this sacred character. Gertrude had never seen an artist before; she had only read about such people. They seemed to her a romantic and mysterious class, whose life was made up of those agreeable accidents that never happened to other persons. And it merely quickened her meditations on this point that Felix should declare, as he repeatedly did, that he was really not an artist. "I have never gone into the thing seriously," he said. "I have never studied; I have had no training. I do a little of everything, and nothing well. I am only an amateur."

It pleased Gertrude even more to think that he was an amateur than to think that he was an artist; the former word, to her fancy, had an even subtler connotation. She knew, however, that it was a word to use more soberly. Mr. Wentworth used it freely; for though he had not been exactly familiar with it, he found it convenient as a help toward classifying Felix, who, as a young man extremely clever and active, and apparently respectable, and yet not engaged in any recognized business, was an importunate anomaly. Of course the bar-

oness and her brother — she was always spoken of first — were a welcome topic of conversation between Mr. Wentworth and his daughters and their occasional visitors.

"And the young man, your nephew, what is his profession?" asked an old gentleman — Mr. Broderip, of Salem — who had been Mr. Wentworth's classmate at Harvard College in the year 1809, and who came into his office in Devonshire Street. (Mr. Wentworth, in his later years, used to go but three times a week to his office, where he had a large amount of highly confidential trust-business to transact.)

"Well, he's an amateur," said Felix's uncle, with folded hands, and with a certain satisfaction in being able to say it. And Mr. Broderip had gone back to Salem with a feeling that this was probably a "European" expression for a broker or a grain exporter.

"I should like to do your head, sir," said Felix to his uncle one evening, before them all, — Mr. Brand and Robert Acton being also present. "I think I should make a very fine thing of it. It's an interesting head; it's very mediæval."

Mr. Wentworth looked grave; he felt awkwardly, as if all the company had come in and found him standing before the looking-glass. "The Lord made it," he said. "I don't think it is for man to make it over again."

"Certainly the Lord made it," replied Felix, laughing, "and he made it very well. But life has been touching up the work. It is a very interesting type of head. It's delightfully wasted and *affiné*. The complexion is wonderfully bleached." And Felix looked round at the circle, as if to call their attention to these interesting points. Mr. Wentworth grew visibly paler. "I should like to do you as an old prelate, an old cardinal, or the prior of an order."

"A prelate, a cardinal?" murmured Mr. Wentworth. "Do you refer to the Roman Catholic priesthood?"

"I mean an old ecclesiastic who should have led a very pure, abstinent life. Now

I take it that has been the case with you, sir; one sees it in your face," Felix proceeded. "You have been very — a — very moderate. Don't you think one always sees that in a man's face?"

"You see more in a man's face than I should think of looking for," said Mr. Wentworth coldly.

The baroness rattled her fan, and gave her brilliant laugh. "It is a risk to look so close!" she exclaimed. "My uncle has some peccadilloes on his conscience." Mr. Wentworth looked at her, painfully at a loss; and in so far as the signs of a pure and abstinent life were visible in his face they were then probably peculiarly manifest. "You are a *beau vieillard*, dear uncle," said Madame Münster, smiling with her foreign eyes.

"I think you are paying me a compliment," said the old man.

"Surely, I am not the first woman that ever did so!" cried the baroness.

"I think you are," said Mr. Wentworth gravely. And turning to Felix he added, in the same tone, "Please don't take my likeness. My children have my daguerreotype. That is quite satisfactory."

"I won't promise," said Felix, "not to work your head into something!"

Mr. Wentworth looked at him and then at all the others; then he got up and slowly walked away.

"Felix," said Gertrude, in the silence that followed, "I wish you would paint my portrait."

Charlotte wondered whether Gertrude was right in wishing this; and she looked at Mr. Brand as the most legitimate way of ascertaining. Whatever Gertrude did or said, Charlotte always looked at Mr. Brand. It was a standing pretext for looking at Mr. Brand, — always, as Charlotte thought, in the interest of Gertrude's welfare. It is true that she felt a tremulous interest in Gertrude being right; for Charlotte, in her small, still way, was a heroic sister.

"We should be glad to have your portrait, Miss Gertrude," said Mr. Brand.

"I should be delighted to paint so charming a model," Felix declared.

"Do you think you are so lovely, my dear?" asked Lizzie Acton, with her little inoffensive pertness, biting off a knot in her knitting.

"It is not because I think I am beautiful," said Gertrude, looking all round. "I don't think I am beautiful, at all." She spoke with a sort of conscious deliberativeness; and it seemed very strange to Charlotte to hear her discussing this question so publicly. "It is because I think it would be amusing to sit and be painted. I have always thought that."

"I am sorry you have not had better things to think about, my daughter," said Mr. Wentworth.

"You are very beautiful, cousin Gertrude," Felix declared.

"That's a compliment," said Gertrude. "I put all the compliments I receive into a little money-jug that has a slit in the side. I shake them up and down, and they rattle. There are not many yet, — only two or three."

"No, it's not a compliment," Felix rejoined. "See; I am careful not to give it the form of a compliment. I did n't think you were beautiful at first, at all. But you have come to seem so little by little."

"Take care, now, your jug does n't burst!" exclaimed Lizzie.

"I think sitting for one's portrait is only one of the various forms of idleness," said Mr. Wentworth. "Their name is legion."

"My dear sir," cried Felix, "you can't be said to be idle when you are making a man work so!"

"One might be painted while one is asleep," suggested Mr. Brand, as a contribution to the discussion.

"Ah, do paint me while I am asleep," said Gertrude to Felix, smiling. And she closed her eyes a little. It had by this time become a matter of almost exciting anxiety to Charlotte what Gertrude would say or would do next.

She began to sit for her portrait on the following day, — in the open air, on the north side of the piazza. "I wish you would tell me what you think of us, — how we seem to you," she said to Felix, as he sat before his easel.

"You seem to me the best people in the world," said Felix.

"You say that," Gertrude resumed, "because it saves you the trouble of saying anything else."

The young man glanced at her over the top of his canvas. "What else should I say? It would certainly be a great deal of trouble to say anything different."

"Well," said Gertrude, "you have seen people before whom you have liked, have n't you?"

"Indeed I have, thank Heaven!"

"And they have been very different from us," Gertrude went on.

"That only proves," said Felix, "that there are a thousand different ways of being good company."

"Do you think us good company?" asked Gertrude.

"Company for a king!"

Gertrude was silent a moment; and then, "There must be a thousand different ways of being dreary," she said; "and sometimes I think we make use of them all."

Felix stood up quickly, and held up his hand. "If you could only keep that look on your face for half an hour, — while I catch it!" he said. "It is uncommonly handsome."

"To look handsome for half an hour, — that is a great deal to ask of me," she answered.

"It would be the portrait of a young woman who has taken some vow, some pledge, that she repents of," said Felix, "and who is thinking it over at leisure."

"I have taken no vow, no pledge," said Gertrude, very gravely. "I have nothing to repent of."

"My dear cousin, that was only a figure of speech. I am very sure that no one in your excellent family has anything to repent of."

"And yet we are always repenting!" Gertrude exclaimed. "That's what I mean by our being dreary. You know it perfectly well; you only pretend that you don't."

Felix gave a quick laugh. "The half hour is going on, and yet you are hand-

somer than ever. One must be careful what one says, you see."

"To me," said Gertrude, "you can say anything."

Felix looked at her, as an artist might, and painted for some time in silence. "Yes, you seem to me different from your father and sister, — from most of the people you have lived with," he observed.

"To say that one's self," Gertrude went on, "is like saying — by implication, at least — that one is better. I am not better; I am much worse. But they say themselves that I am different. It makes them unhappy."

"Since you accuse me of concealing my real impressions, I may admit that I think the tendency — among you generally — is to be made unhappy too easily."

"I wish you would tell that to my father," said Gertrude.

"It might make him more unhappy!" Felix exclaimed, laughing.

"It certainly would. I don't believe you have seen people like that."

"Ah, my dear cousin, how do you know what I have seen?" Felix demanded. "How can I tell you?"

"You might tell me a great many things, if you only would. You have seen people like yourself, — people who are bright and gay and fond of amusement. We are not fond of amusement."

"Yes," said Felix, "I confess that rather strikes me. You don't seem to me to get all the pleasure out of life that you might. You don't seem to me to enjoy . . . Do you mind my saying this?" he asked, pausing.

"Please go on," said the girl, earnestly.

"You seem to me very well placed for enjoying. You have money and liberty and what is called in Europe a 'position.' But you take a painful view of life, as one may say."

"One ought to think it bright and charming and delightful, eh?" asked Gertrude.

"I should say so, — if one can. It is true it all depends upon that," Felix added.

"You know there is a great deal of misery in the world," said his model.

"I have seen a little of it," the young man rejoined. "But it was all over there, — beyond the sea. I don't see any here. This is a paradise."

Gertrude said nothing; she sat looking at the dahlias and the currant-bushes in the garden, while Felix went on with his work. "To 'enjoy,'" she began at last, "to take life — not painfully, must one do something wrong?"

Felix gave his long, light laugh again. "Seriously, I think not. And for this reason, among others; you strike me as very capable of enjoying, if the chance were given you, and yet at the same time as incapable of wrong-doing."

"I am sure," said Gertrude, "that you are very wrong in telling a person that she is incapable of that. We are never nearer to evil than when we believe that."

"You are handsomer than ever," observed Felix, irrelevantly.

Gertrude had got used to hearing him say this. There was not so much excitement in it as at first. "What ought one to do?" she continued. "To give parties, to go to the theatre, to read novels, to keep late hours?"

"I don't think it's what one does or one does n't do that promotes enjoyment," her companion answered. "It's the general way of looking at life."

"They look at it as a discipline, — that's what they do here. I have often been told that."

"Well, that's very good. But there is another way," added Felix, smiling: "to look at it as an opportunity."

"An opportunity, — yes," said Gertrude. "One would get more pleasure that way."

"I don't attempt to say anything better for it than that it has been my own way, — and that is not saying much!" Felix had laid down his palette and brushes; he was leaning back, with his arms folded, to judge the effect of his work. "And you know," he said, "I am a very petty personage."

"You have a great deal of talent," said Gertrude.

"No,—no," the young man rejoined, in a tone of cheerful impartiality, "I have not a great deal of talent. It is nothing at all remarkable. I assure you I should know if it were. I shall always be obscure. The world will never hear of me." Gertrude looked at him with a strange feeling. She was thinking of the great world which he knew and which she did not, and how full of brilliant talents it must be, since it could afford to make light of his abilities. "You need n't in general attach much importance to anything I tell you," he pursued; "but you may believe me when I say this,—that I am little better than a good-natured feather-head."

"A feather-head?" she repeated.

"I'm a species of Bohemian."

"A Bohemian?" Gertrude had never heard this term before, save as a geographical denomination; and she quite failed to understand the figurative meaning which her companion appeared to attach to it. But it gave her pleasure.

Felix had pushed back his chair and risen to his feet; he slowly came toward her, smiling. "I am a sort of adventurer," he said, looking down at her.

She got up, meeting his smile. "An adventurer?" she repeated. "I should like to hear your adventures."

For an instant she believed that he was going to take her hand; but he dropped his own hands suddenly into the pockets of his painting-jacket. "There is no reason why you should n't," he said. "I have been an adventurer, but my adventures have been very innocent. They have all been happy ones; I don't think there are any I should n't tell. They were very pleasant and very pretty; I should like to go over them in memory. Sit down again, and I will begin," he added in a moment, with his naturally persuasive smile.

Gertrude sat down again on that day, and she sat down on several other days. Felix, while he plied his brush, told her a great many stories, and she listened with charmed avidity. Her eyes rested upon his lips; she was very serious; sometimes, from her air of wondering gravity, he thought she was displeased. But

Felix never believed for more than a single moment in any displeasure of his own producing. This would have been fatuity if the optimism it expressed had not been much more a hope than a prejudice. It is beside the matter to say that he had a good conscience; for the best conscience is a sort of self-reproach, and this young man's brilliantly healthy nature spent itself in objective good intentions which were ignorant of any test save exactness in hitting their mark. He told Gertrude how he had walked over France and Italy with a painter's knapsack on his back, paying his way often by knocking off a flattering portrait of his host or hostess. He told her how he had played the violin in a little band of musicians—not of high celebrity—who traveled through foreign lands giving provincial concerts. He told her also how he had been a momentary ornament of a troupe of strolling actors, engaged in the arduous task of interpreting Shakespeare to French and German, Polish and Hungarian audiences.

While this periodical recital was going on, Gertrude lived in a fantastic world; she seemed to herself to be reading a romance that came out in daily numbers. She had known nothing so delightful since the perusal of Nicholas Nickleby. One afternoon she went to see her cousin, Mrs. Acton, Robert's mother, who was a great invalid, never leaving the house. She came back alone, on foot, across the fields,—this being a short way which they often used. Felix had gone to Boston with her father, who desired to take the young man to call upon some of his friends, old gentlemen who remembered his mother,—remembered her, but said nothing about her,—and several of whom, with the gentle ladies their wives, had driven out from town to pay their respects at the little house among the apple-trees, in vehicles which reminded the baroness, who received her visitors with discriminating civility, of the large, light, rattling barouche in which she herself had made her journey to this neighborhood. The afternoon was waning; in the western sky the great picture of a New En-

gland sunset, painted in crimson and silver, was suspended from the zenith; and the stony pastures, as Gertrude traversed them, thinking intently to herself, were covered with a light, clear glow. At the open gate of one of the fields she saw from the distance a man's figure; he stood there as if he were waiting for her, and as she came nearer she recognized Mr. Brand. She had a feeling as of not having seen him for some time; she could not have said for how long, for it yet seemed to her that he had been very lately at the house.

"May I walk back with you?" he asked. And when she had said that he might if he wanted, he observed that he had seen her and recognized her half a mile away.

"You must have very good eyes," said Gertrude.

"Yes, I have very good eyes, Miss Gertrude," said Mr. Brand. She perceived that he meant something; but for a long time past Mr. Brand had constantly meant something, and she had almost got used to it. She felt, however, that what he meant had now a renewed power to disturb her, to perplex and agitate her. He walked beside her in silence for a moment, and then he added, "I have had no trouble in seeing that you are beginning to avoid me. But perhaps," he went on, "one need n't have had very good eyes to see that."

"I have not avoided you," said Gertrude, without looking at him.

"I think you have been unconscious that you were avoiding me," Mr. Brand replied. "You have not even known that I was there."

"Well, you are here now, Mr. Brand!" said Gertrude, with a little laugh. "I know that very well."

He made no rejoinder. He simply walked beside her slowly, as they were obliged to walk over the soft grass. Presently they came to another gate, which was closed. Mr. Brand laid his hand upon it, but he made no movement to open it; he stood and looked at his companion. "You are very much interested, — very much absorbed," he said.

Gertrude glanced at him; she saw that he was pale and that he looked excited. She had never seen Mr. Brand excited before, and she felt that the spectacle, if fully carried out, would be impressive, almost painful. "Absorbed in what?" she asked. Then she looked away at the illuminated sky. She felt guilty and uncomfortable, and yet she was vexed with herself for feeling so. But Mr. Brand, as he stood there looking at her with his small, kind, persistent eyes, represented an immense body of half-obliterated obligations, that were rising again into a certain distinctness.

"You have new interests, new occupations," he went on. "I don't know that I can say that you have new duties. We have always old ones, Gertrude," he added.

"Please open the gate, Mr. Brand," she said; and she felt as if, in saying so, she were cowardly and petulant. But he opened the gate, and allowed her to pass; then he closed it behind himself. Before she had time to turn away he put out his hand and held her an instant by the wrist.

"I want to say something to you," he said.

"I know what you want to say," she answered. And she was on the point of adding, "And I know just how you will say it;" but these words she kept back.

"I love you, Gertrude," he said. "I love you very much; I love you more than ever."

He said the words just as she had known he would; she had heard them before. They had no charm for her; she had said to herself before that it was very strange. It was supposed to be delightful for a woman to listen to such words; but these seemed to her flat and mechanical. "I wish you would forget that," she declared.

"How can I, — why should I?" he asked.

"I have made you no promise, — given you no pledge," she said, looking at him, with her voice trembling a little.

"You have let me feel that I have an influence over you. You have opened your mind to me."

"I never opened my mind to you, Mr. Brand!" Gertrude cried, with some vehemence.

"Then you were not so frank as I thought, — as we all thought."

"I don't see what any one else had to do with it!" cried the girl.

"I mean your father and your sister. You know it makes them happy to think you will listen to me."

She gave a little laugh. "It does not make them happy," she said. "Nothing makes them happy. No one is happy here."

"I think your cousin is very happy, — Mr. Young," rejoined Mr. Brand, in a soft, almost timid tone.

"So much the better for him!" And Gertrude gave her little laugh again.

The young man looked at her a moment. "You are very much changed," he said.

"I am glad to hear it," Gertrude declared.

"I am not. I have known you a long time, and I have loved you as you were."

"I am much obliged to you," said Gertrude. "I must be going home."

He, on his side, gave a little laugh. "You certainly do avoid me, — you see!"

"Avoid me, then," said the girl.

He looked at her again; and then, very gently, "No, I will not avoid you," he said; "but I will leave you, for the present, to yourself. I think you will remember — after a while — some of the things you have forgotten. I think you will come back to me; I have great faith in that."

This time his voice was very touching; there was a strong, reproachful force in what he said, and Gertrude could answer nothing. He turned away and stood there, leaning his elbows on the gate and looking at the beautiful sunset. Gertrude left him and took her way home again; but when she reached the middle of the next field she suddenly burst into tears. Her tears seemed to her to have been a long time gathering, and for some moments it was a kind of glee to shed them. But they presently

passed away. There was something a little hard about Gertrude; and she never wept again.

VI.

Going of an afternoon to call upon his niece, Mr. Wentworth more than once found Robert Acton sitting in her little drawing-room. This was in no degree, to Mr. Wentworth, a perturbing fact, for he had no sense of competing with his young kinsman for Eugenia's good graces. Madame Münster's uncle had the highest opinion of Robert Acton, who, indeed, in the family at large, was the object of a great deal of undemonstrative appreciation. They were all proud of him, in so far as the charge of being proud may be brought against people who were, habitually, distinctly guiltless of the misdemeanor known as "taking credit." They never boasted of Robert Acton, nor indulged in vain-glorious reference to him; they never quoted the clever things he had said, nor mentioned the generous things he had done. But a sort of frigidly-tender faith in his unlimited goodness was a part of their personal sense of right; and there can, perhaps, be no better proof of the high esteem in which he was held than the fact that no explicit judgment was ever passed upon his actions. He was no more praised than he was blamed; but he was tacitly felt to be an ornament to his circle. He was the man of the world of the family. He had been to China and brought home a collection of curiosities; he had made a fortune, — or rather he had quintupled a fortune already considerable; he was distinguished by that combination of celibacy, "property," and good humor which appeals to even the most subdued imaginations; and it was taken for granted that he would presently place these advantages at the disposal of some well-regulated young woman of his own "set." Mr. Wentworth was not a man to admit to himself that — his paternal duties apart — he liked any individual much better than all other individuals; but he thought Robert Acton extremely judicious; and

this was perhaps as near an approach as he was capable of to the enthusiasm of preference, which his temperament repudiated as it would have disengaged itself from something slightly unchaste. Acton was, in fact, very judicious, — and something more beside; and indeed it must be claimed for Mr. Wentworth that in the more illicit parts of his preference there hovered the vague adumbration of a belief that his cousin's final merit was a certain enviable capacity for whistling, rather gallantly, at the sanctions of mere judgment, — for showing a larger courage, a finer quality of pluck, than common occasion demanded. Mr. Wentworth would never have risked the intimation that Acton was made, in the smallest degree, of the stuff of a hero; but this is small blame to him, for Robert would certainly never have risked it himself. Acton certainly exercised great discretion in all things, — beginning with his estimate of himself. He knew that he was by no means so much of a man of the world as he was supposed to be in local circles; but it must be added that he knew also that his natural shrewdness had a reach of which he had never quite given local circles the measure. He was addicted to taking the humorous view of things, and he had discovered that even in the narrowest circles such a disposition may find frequent opportunities. Such opportunities had formed for some time — that is, since his return from China, a year and a half before — the most active element in this gentleman's life, which had just now a rather indolent air. He was perfectly willing to get married. He was very fond of books, and he had a handsome library; that is, his books were much more numerous than Mr. Wentworth's. He was also very fond of pictures; but it must be confessed, in the fierce light of contemporary criticism, that his walls were adorned with several masterpieces that had rather miscarried. He had got his learning — and there was more of it than commonly appeared — at Harvard College; and he took a pleasure in old associations, which made it a part of his daily contentment to live so near this institu-

tion that he often passed it in driving to Boston. He was extremely interested in the Baroness Münster.

She was very frank with him; or at least she intended to be. "I am sure you find it very strange that I should have settled down in this out-of-the-way part of the world!" she said to him three or four weeks after she had installed herself. "I am certain you are wondering about my motives. They are very pure." The baroness by this time was an old inhabitant; the best society in Boston had called upon her, and Clifford Wentworth had taken her three times to drive in his buggy.

Robert Acton was seated near her, playing with a fan; there were always several fans lying about her drawing-room, with long ribbons of different colors attached to them, and Acton was always playing with one. "No, I don't find it at all strange," he said slowly, smiling. "That a clever woman should turn up in Boston, or its suburbs, — that does not require so much explanation. Boston is a very nice place."

"If you wish to make me contradict you," said the baroness, "*vous vous y prenez mal*. In certain moods there is nothing I am not capable of agreeing to. Boston is a paradise, and we are in the suburbs of Paradise."

"Just now I am not at all in the suburbs; I am in the place itself," rejoined Acton, who was lounging a little in his chair. He was, however, not always lounging; and when he was he was not quite so relaxed as he pretended. To a certain extent, he sought refuge from shyness in this appearance of relaxation; and like many persons in the same circumstances he somewhat exaggerated the appearance. Beyond this, the air of being much at his ease was a cover for vigilant observation. He was more than interested in this clever woman, who, whatever he might say, was clever not at all after the Boston fashion; she plunged him into a kind of excitement, held him in vague suspense. He was obliged to admit to himself that he had never yet seen a woman just like this, — not even in China. He was ashamed, for inscruta-

ble reasons, of the vivacity of his emotion, and he carried it off, superficially, by taking, still superficially, the humorous view of Madame Münster. It was not at all true that he thought it very natural of her to have made this pious pilgrimage. It might have been said of him in advance that he was too good a Bostonian to regard in the light of an eccentricity the desire of even the remotest alien to visit the New England metropolis. This was an impulse for which, surely, no apology was needed; and Madame Münster was the fortunate possessor of several New England cousins. In fact, however, Madame Münster struck him as out of keeping with her little circle; she was at the best a most agreeable, a most gracefully mystifying anomaly. He knew very well that it would not do to address these reflections too crudely to Mr. Wentworth; he would never have remarked to the old gentleman that he wondered what the baroness was up to. And indeed he had no great desire to share his vague mistrust with any one. There was a personal pleasure in it; the greatest pleasure he had known at least since he had come from China. He would keep the baroness, for better or worse, to himself; he had a feeling that he deserved to enjoy a monopoly of her, for he was certainly the person who had most adequately gauged her capacity for social intercourse. Before long it became apparent to him that the baroness was disposed to lay no tax upon such a monopoly.

One day (he was sitting there again and playing with a fan) she asked him to apologize, should the occasion present itself, to certain people in Boston for her not having returned their calls. "There are half a dozen places," she said; "a formidable list. Charlotte Wentworth has written it out for me, in a terrifically distinct hand. There is no ambiguity on the subject; I know perfectly where I must go. Mr. Wentworth informs me that the carriage is always at my disposal, and Charlotte offers to go with me, in a pair of tight gloves and a very stiff petticoat. And yet for three days

I have been putting it off. They must think me horribly vicious."

"You ask me to apologize," said Acton, "but you don't tell me what excuse I can offer."

"That is more," the baroness declared, "than I am held to. It would be like my asking you to buy me a bouquet and giving you the money. I have no reason except that — somehow — it's too violent an effort. It is not inspiring. Would n't that serve as an excuse, in Boston? I am told they are very sincere; they don't tell fibs. And then Felix ought to go with me, and he is never in readiness. I don't see him. He is always roaming about the fields and sketching old barns, or taking ten-mile walks, or painting some one's portrait, or rowing on the pond, or flirting with Gertrude Wentworth."

"I should think it would amuse you to go and see a few people," said Acton. "You are having a very quiet time of it here. It's a dull life for you."

"Ah, the quiet, — the quiet!" the baroness exclaimed. "That's what I like. It's rest. That's what I came here for. Amusement? I have had amusement. And as for seeing people, — I have already seen a great many in my life. If it did n't sound ungracious I should say that I wish very humbly your people here would leave me alone!"

Acton looked at her a moment, and she looked at him. She was a woman who took being looked at remarkably well. "So you have come here for rest?" he asked.

"So I may say. I came for many of those reasons that are no reasons, — don't you know? — and yet that are really the best: to come away, to change, to break with everything. When once one comes away one must arrive somewhere, and I asked myself why I should n't arrive here."

"You certainly had time, on the way!" said Acton, laughing.

Madame Münster looked at him again; and then, smiling: "And I have certainly had time, since I got here, to ask myself why I came. However, I never ask myself idle questions. Here I am,

and it seems to me you ought only to thank me."

"When you go away you will see the difficulties I shall put in your path."

"You mean to put difficulties in my path?" she asked, rearranging the rosebud in her corsage.

"The greatest of all, — that of having been so agreeable" —

"That I shall be unable to depart? Don't be too sure. I have left some very agreeable people over there."

"Ah," said Acton, "but it was to come here, where I am!"

"I did n't know of your existence. Excuse me for saying anything so rude; but, honestly speaking, I did n't. No," the baroness pursued, "it was precisely not to see you — such people as you — that I came."

"Such people as me?" cried Acton.

"I had a sort of longing to come into those natural relations which I knew I should find here. Over there I had only, as I may say, artificial relations. Don't you see the difference?"

"The difference tells against me," said Acton. "I suppose I am an artificial relation."

"Conventional," declared the baroness; "very conventional."

"Well, there is one way in which the relation of a lady and gentleman may always become natural," said Acton.

"You mean by their becoming lovers? That may be natural or not. And at any rate," rejoined Eugenia, "*nous n'en sommes pas là!*"

They were not, as yet; but a little later, when she began to go with him to drive, it might almost have seemed that they were. He came for her several times, alone, in his high "wagon," drawn by a pair of charming light-limbed horses. It was different, her having gone with Clifford Wentworth, who was her cousin, and so much younger. It was not to be imagined that she should have a flirtation with Clifford, who was a mere shamefaced boy, and whom a large section of Boston society supposed to be "engaged" to Lizzie Acton. Not indeed that it was to be conceived that the baroness was a possible party to any flir-

tation whatever; for she was undoubtedly a married lady. It was generally known that her matrimonial condition was of the "morganatic" order; but in its natural aversion to suppose that this meant anything less than absolute wedlock, the conscience of the community took refuge in the belief that it implied something even more.

Acton wished her to think highly of American scenery, and he drove her to great distances, picking out the prettiest roads and the largest points of view. If we are good when we are contented, Eugenia's virtues should now certainly have been uppermost; for she found a charm in the rapid movement through a wild country, and in a companion who from time to time made the vehicle dip, with a motion like a swallow's flight, over roads of primitive construction, and who, as she felt, would do a great many things that she might ask him. Sometimes, for a couple of hours together, there were almost no houses; there were nothing but woods and rivers and lakes and horizons adorned with bright-looking mountains. It seemed to the baroness very wild, as I have said, and lovely; but the impression added something to that sense of the enlargement of opportunity which had been born of her arrival in the New World.

One day — it was late in the afternoon — Acton pulled up his horses on the crest of a hill which commanded a beautiful prospect. He let them stand a long time to rest, while he sat there and talked with Madame Münster. The prospect was beautiful in spite of there being nothing human within sight. There was a wilderness of woods, and the gleam of a distant river, and a glimpse of half the hill-tops in Massachusetts. The road had a wide, grassy margin, on the further side of which there flowed a deep, clear brook; there were wild flowers in the grass, and beside the brook lay the trunk of a fallen tree. Acton waited a while; at last a rustic wayfarer came trudging along the road. Acton asked him to hold the horses, — a service he consented to render, as a friendly turn to a fellow-citizen. Then he invited the

baroness to descend, and the two wandered away, across the grass, and sat down on the log beside the brook.

"I imagine it does n't remind you of Silberstadt," said Acton. It was the first time that he had mentioned Silberstadt to her for particular reasons. He knew she had a husband there, and this was disagreeable to him; and, furthermore, it had been repeated to him that this husband wished to put her away,—a state of affairs to which even indirect reference was to be deprecated. It was true, nevertheless, that the baroness herself had often alluded to Silberstadt; and Acton had often wondered why her husband wished to get rid of her. It was a curious position for a lady,—this being known as a repudiated wife; and it is worthy of observation that the baroness carried it off with exceeding grace and dignity. She had made it felt, from the first, that there were two sides to the question, and that her own side, when she should choose to present it, would be replete with touching interest.

"It does not remind me of the town, of course," she said, "of the sculptured gables and the Gothic churches, of the wonderful Schloss, with its moat and its clustering towers. But it has a little look of some other parts of the principality. One might fancy one's self among those grand old German forests, those legendary mountains; the sort of country one sees from the windows at Shreckenstein."

"What is Shreckenstein?" asked Acton.

"It is a great castle,—the summer residence of the reigning prince."

"Have you ever lived there?"

"I have stayed there," said the baroness. Acton was silent; he looked a while at the uncastled landscape before him. "It is the first time you have ever asked me about Silberstadt," she said. "I should think you would want to know about my marriage; it must seem to you very strange."

Acton looked at her a moment. "Now you would n't like me to say that!"

"You Americans have such odd

ways!" the baroness declared. "You never ask anything outright; there seem to be so many things you can't talk about."

"We Americans are very polite," said Acton, whose national consciousness had been complicated by a residence in foreign lands, and who yet disliked to hear Americans abused. "We don't like to tread upon people's toes," he said. "But I should like very much to hear about your marriage. Now tell me how it came about."

"The prince fell in love with me," replied the baroness simply; "he pressed his suit very hard. At first he did n't wish me to marry him. But on that basis I refused to listen to him. So he offered me marriage,—in so far as he might. I was young, and I confess I was rather flattered. But if it were to be done again now, I certainly should n't accept him."

"How long ago was this?" asked Acton.

"Oh—several years," said Eugenia. "You should never ask a woman for dates."

"Why, I should think that when a woman was relating history" . . . Acton answered. "And now he wants to break it off?"

"They want him to make a political marriage. It is his brother's idea. His brother is very clever."

"They must be a precious pair!" cried Robert Acton.

The baroness gave a little philosophic shrug. "Que voulez-vous? They are princes. They think they are treating me very well. Silberstadt is a perfectly despotic little state, and the reigning prince may annul the marriage by a stroke of his pen. But he has promised me, nevertheless, not to do so without my formal consent."

"And this you have refused?"

"Hitherto. It is an indignity, and I have wished at least to make it difficult for them. But I have a little document in my writing-desk which I have only to sign and send back to the prince."

"Then it will be all over?"

The baroness lifted her hand, and

dropped it again. "Of course I shall keep my title; at least, I shall be at liberty to keep it if I choose. And I suppose I shall keep it. One must have a name. And I shall keep my pension. It is very small, — it is wretchedly small; but it is what I live on."

"And you have only to sign that paper?" Acton asked.

The baroness looked at him a moment. "Do you urge it?"

He got up slowly, and stood with his hands in his pockets. "What do you gain by not doing it?"

"I am supposed to gain this advantage — that if I delay, or temporize, the prince may come back to me, may make a stand against his brother. He is very fond of me, and his brother has pushed him only little by little."

"If he were to come back to you," said Acton, "would you — would you take him back?"

The baroness met his eyes; she colored just a little. Then she rose. "I should have the satisfaction of saying, 'Now it is my turn. I break with your serene highness!'"

They began to walk toward the carriage. "Well," said Robert Acton, "it's a curious story! How did you make his acquaintance?"

"I was staying with an old lady — an old countess — in Dresden. She had been a friend of my father's. My father was dead; I was very much alone. My brother was wandering about the world in a theatrical troupe."

"Your brother ought to have stayed with you," Acton observed, "and kept you from putting your trust in princes."

The baroness was silent a moment, and then, "He did what he could," she said. "He sent me money. The old countess encouraged the prince; she was even pressing. It seems to me," Madame Münster added, gently, "that — under the circumstances — I behaved very well."

Acton glanced at her, and made the observation — he had made it before — that a woman looks the prettier for having unfolded her wrongs or her sufferings. "Well," he reflected, audibly,

"I should like to see you send his serene highness — somewhere!"

Madame Münster stooped and plucked a daisy from the grass. "And not sign my renunciation?"

"Well, I don't know, — I don't know," said Acton.

"In one case I should have my revenge; in another case I should have my liberty."

Acton gave a little laugh as he helped her into the carriage. "At any rate," he said, "take good care of that paper."

A couple of days afterward he asked her to come and see his house. The visit had already been proposed, but it had been put off in consequence of his mother's illness. She was a constant invalid, and she had passed these recent years, very patiently, in a great flowered arm-chair at her bedroom window. Lately, for some days, she had been unable to see any one; but now she was better, and she sent the baroness a very civil message. Acton had wished their visitor to come to dinner; but Madame Münster preferred to begin with a simple call. She had reflected that if she should go to dinner Mr. Wentworth and his daughters would also be asked, and it had seemed to her that the peculiar character of the occasion would be best preserved in a *tête-à-tête* with her host. Why the occasion should have a peculiar character she explained to no one. As far as any one could see, it was simply very pleasant. Acton came for her and drove her to his door, an operation which was rapidly performed. His house the baroness mentally pronounced a very good one; more articulately, she declared that it was enchanting. It was large and square and painted brown; it stood in a well-kept shrubbery, and was approached, from the gate, by a short drive. It was, moreover, a much more modern dwelling than Mr. Wentworth's, and was more redundantly upholstered and expensively ornamented. The baroness perceived that her entertainer had analyzed material comfort to a sufficiently fine point. And then she possessed the most delightful *chinoiserie*s, — trophies of his sojourn in the Celestial Empire: pa-

godas of ebony and cabinets of ivory; sculptured monsters, grinning and leering on chimney-pieces, in front of beautifully figured hand-screens; porcelain dinner-sets, gleaming behind the glass doors of mahogany buffets; large screens, in corners, covered with tense silk and embroidered with mandarins and dragons. These things were scattered all over the house, and they gave Eugenia a pretext for a complete domiciliary visit. She liked it, she enjoyed it; she thought it a very nice place. It had a mixture of the homely and the liberal, and though it was almost a museum the large, little-used rooms were as fresh and clean as a well-kept dairy. Lizzie Acton told her that she dusted all the pagodas and other curiosities every day with her own hands; and the baroness answered that she was evidently a household fairy. Lizzie had not at all the look of a young lady who dusted things; she wore such pretty dresses and had such delicate fingers that it was difficult to imagine her immersed in sordid cares. She had come to meet Madame Münster on her arrival, but she had said nothing, or almost nothing, and the baroness had again reflected—she had had occasion to do so before—that American girls had no manners. She disliked this little American girl, and she was quite prepared to learn that she had failed to commend herself to Miss Acton. Lizzie struck her as positive and explicit almost to perversity; and the idea of her combining the apparent incongruities of a taste for housework and the wearing of fresh, Parisian-looking dresses suggested the possession of a dangerous energy. It was a source of irritation to the baroness that in this country it should seem to matter whether a little girl were a little less or a little more of a nonentity; for Eugenia had hitherto been conscious of no moral pressure as regards the appreciation of diminutive virgins. It was perhaps an indication of Lizzie's perversity that she very soon retired, and left the baroness on her brother's hands. Acton talked a great deal about his chinoiserie; he knew a good deal about porcelain and bric-a-brac. The baron-

ess, in her progress through the house, made, as it were, a great many stations. She sat down everywhere, confessed to being a little tired, and asked about the various objects with a curious mixture of alertness and inattention. If there had been any one to say it to she would have declared that she was positively in love with her host; but she could hardly make this declaration—even in the strictest confidence—to Acton himself. It gave her, nevertheless, a pleasure that had some of the charm of unwontedness to feel, with that admirable keenness with which she was capable of feeling things, that he had a disposition without any edges; that even his humorous irony always expanded toward the point. One's impression of his honesty was almost like carrying a bunch of flowers; the perfume was most agreeable, but they were, occasionally an inconvenience. One could trust him, at any rate, round all the corners of the world; and, withal, he was not absolutely simple, which would have been excess; he was only relatively simple, which was quite enough for the baroness.

Lizzie reappeared to say that her mother would now be happy to receive Madame Münster; and the baroness followed her to Mrs. Acton's apartment. Eugenia reflected, as she went, that it was not the affectation of impertinence that made her dislike this young lady, for on that ground she could easily have beaten her. It was not an aspiration on the girl's part to rivalry, but a kind of laughing, childish-mocking indifference to the results of comparison. Mrs. Acton was an emaciated, sweet-faced woman of five and fifty, sitting with pillows behind her, and looking out on a clump of hemlocks. She was very modest, very timid, and very ill; she made Eugenia feel grateful that she herself was not like that,—neither so ill, nor, possibly, so modest. On a chair, beside her, lay a volume of Emerson's *Essays*. It was a great occasion for poor Mrs. Acton, in her helpless condition, to be confronted with a clever foreign lady, who had more manner than any lady—any dozen ladies—that she had ever seen.

"I have heard a great deal about you," she said, softly, to the baroness.

"From your son, eh?" Eugenia asked. "He has talked to me immensely of you. Oh, he talks of you as you would like," the baroness declared; "as such a son *must* talk of such a mother!"

Mrs. Acton sat gazing; this was part of Madame Münster's "manner." But Robert Acton was gazing too, in vivid consciousness that he had barely mentioned his mother to their brilliant guest. He never talked of this still maternal presence, — a presence refined to such delicacy that it had almost resolved itself, with him, simply into the subjective emotion of gratitude. And Acton rarely talked of his emotions. The baroness turned her smile toward him, and she instantly felt that she had been observed to be fibbing. She had struck a false note. But who were these people to whom such fibbing was not pleasing? If they were

annoyed, the baroness was equally so; and after the exchange of a few civil inquiries and low-voiced responses she took leave of Mrs. Acton. She begged Robert not to come home with her; she would get into the carriage alone; she preferred that. This was imperious, and she thought he looked disappointed. While she stood before the door with him — the carriage was turning in the gravel-walk — this thought restored her serenity.

When she had given him her hand in farewell she looked at him a moment. "I have almost decided to dispatch that paper," she said.

He knew that she alluded to the document that she had called her renunciation; and he assisted her into the carriage without saying anything. But just before the vehicle began to move he said, "Well, when you *have* dispatched it, I hope you will let me know!"

Henry James, Jr.

THE STAGE IN GERMANY.

WHILE friends of the drama are complaining that the English stage, if not really sunken, has at least ceased to keep pace with the progress made in other countries, it will be found interesting to turn our attention to a drama of which but little is practically known, either in England or in America. Although the Germans are far from satisfied with their theatre, still, both in actual condition and in the spirit pervading it, it is to be regarded as an ideal for us while ours remains in its present state.

In Germany the theatres may be divided into three classes: the Hof, or court theatres; the Stadt, or city theatres; and the theatres which are maintained entirely by private enterprise. The system of court theatres is different from that of France, where the houses are the property of the state, but are

leased to their managers under certain conditions, the manager receiving a subsidy greater or less according to circumstances. The court theatres in Germany are directly controlled, as well as owned, by the government, and are under the direction of an inspector appointed by the monarch. Nearly every one of the German states has its court theatre. Prussia has five, — the opera-house and the play-house (Schauspielhaus) in Berlin, and the theatres in the annexed capitals, Hanover, Cassel, and Wiesbaden; Bavaria has three in Munich; Saxony, two in Dresden; and Baden, one each in Karlsruhe, Mannheim, and Baden-Baden. The ruling princes generally take special pride in their theatres, and as the sums expended on them from this source render them in a measure independent of public support, the management is en-

abled to maintain a high standard, while at the same time it endeavors to pursue such a course as will sustain the public interest and make the box-office receipts as large as possible. This is, however, a secondary consideration, and as the court theatres are patronized chiefly by the cultivated classes it is natural that productions of the higher order should draw the largest houses. Owing to the number of the court theatres their influence is powerful, and makes itself strongly felt in the other theatres of the country.

Occupying a middle place between the court and the private theatres come the Stadt theatres of the great commercial cities like Hamburg, Leipzig, Cologne, and Bremen. The theatres are owned by the city, and are either managed by a director appointed by the authorities, or, as is more usually the case, leased for a nominal sum to a manager, under certain restrictions as to the standard to be maintained in the quality of the performances, and in the acting, prices of admission, subscriptions, etc. The character of these city theatres is very much the same as that of the court theatres, and they have also a most cultivated public, although, very naturally, hardly so aristocratic as with the former. But no theatres make a better showing for the money expended than do these: for while they have no state treasury to look to for relief in case of a deficiency, they have a most exacting and critical public, hard to please, but quick to recognize when it is well served; and the manager, who is financially interested, perceives the necessity, as well as the advantage, of making every mark expended go as far as possible. On the other side, there is apt to be extravagance of expenditure at the court theatres, often a result of favoritism, as in the case of salaries; a handsome young actress, occupying in reality a subordinate position, may perhaps be found standing higher on the pay-list than some prominent and highly talented member of the company.

The theatres which have no connection with the state or city correspond to the theatres of England and America,

and like them are of all grades, from the Stadt Theatre in Vienna, the Residenz Theatre in Berlin, and the Thalia Theatre in Hamburg, down to the cheap and unpretending establishments in the outskirts, where the public sits and sips its beer while indifferent actors present some roaring farce, or perhaps murder their way through a classic tragedy.

A description of some prominent theatre will probably give a better idea of the characteristic features of the German stage than much generalizing; such an example may be found in Leipzig's Stadt Theatre. In situation and architecture it is one of the most imposing and beautiful theatres in the world, although many others are built of finer materials and bear the evidence of having cost immense sums of money. Built in a remarkably classic Renaissance style, it shows a grand dignity of form, set off with exquisite grace of simple adornment, and a most perfect symmetry in its lines and proportions. It stands facing the great Augustus Platz, a grand public square of several acres, devoted to military parades and public displays. On both sides of the theatre are broad streets, and in its rear is the park of the public promenade surrounding the inner city. A massive stone terrace, where open-air concerts are given in the summer, overlooks a charming little lake. The interior is free from all florid ornamentation, and is comfortable, well ventilated, simple and pure in style, with a quiet elegance in its tasteful richness of effect. Its cost in 1868 was about six hundred thousand dollars, although now it could hardly be built for three times that sum. This theatre, together with the old Stadt Theatre, a quaint structure rich in its historical associations, is leased, under certain conditions, to a director for thirty thousand marks, or about seventy-five hundred dollars, a year; and each of the three directors who have been in charge since the new theatre was built has retired with ample fortunes, notwithstanding they have been obliged to maintain a first-class drama and opera, and the scale of prices which is set by the city authorities, and which

is alike for both opera and drama, is remarkably low even for Germany. The very best seats in the house cost only a dollar, and the seats in the upper gallery cost twelve and eighteen cents. The parquet seats, which are as pleasant and comfortable as any in the house, cost sixty cents, and students have places in the parterre, just in the rear of the parquet, for eighteen cents. (In nearly all the university cities students have special privileges at the places of amusement. In Berlin they are remarkably favored, and at nearly every theatre and concert room they obtain good seats for half-price, and sometimes for quarter-price.) At the old Stadt Theatre prices are about one third cheaper, and on Sunday afternoon classic plays are given at half-price, — a custom which originated in Vienna, and found a speedy following throughout Germany. This idea of cheap classical performances was projected with the philanthropic motive of educating and elevating the taste of the populace. The results have confirmed all anticipations, and every Sunday afternoon the theatre is crowded with enthusiastic audiences.

This very cheapness is probably one great reason why the Leipzig theatre directors have met with such great pecuniary success. It is more profitable to play to a full house at low prices than to a thin house at high prices; and in Leipzig the theatre is always well filled, and generally crowded, for the prices are so moderate that they are within the reach of all classes. Theatre-going is hardly looked on as a luxury, but as a matter of course, ranking with the daily paper and cup of coffee after dinner. Everybody goes to the theatre, and it would not be surprising to hear one's washerwoman give her opinion about the latest comedy, which she saw from her six-cent place in the old theatre gallery.

In the new theatre the drama is given on alternate nights with the opera, and there are only five nights in the year when the theatre is closed, — the two fast-days and the last three days of Passion Week. In the old theatre there are generally three or four performances a

week, except at the great fair in the spring and autumn, when the theatre is open nightly. Two thirds of all the reserved seats in the new theatre are sold by subscription, at about three fifths of the regular price, and something like three hundred subscription performances are guaranteed in the course of the year. The receipts from the subscriptions pay the expenses of the theatre, and all other receipts are clear profit. A theatre subscription, like a subscription to the famous Gewandhaus concerts, is very popular, and it is rarely that one is offered for sale. It is regarded almost like a title of nobility, and old families treasure their *abonnement* next to their genealogical chart.

The performances generally begin at half past six o'clock, and are out between nine and ten, so that after the theatre a good part of the evening still remains for social pleasures. Going to the theatre there is not such a terrible solemnity as it is in London, and, in a less degree, with us. Unless it were some elaborate state festivity, no one would think of attending even the royal opera in Berlin, Dresden, or Munich in full dress. The German says: We go to enjoy the play or the music, not to show our toilette. And so the auditorium of a German opera-house looks quite differently from a London one, with its chattering people in elaborate dress, who, it is easy to see, cannot understand the language they are but half hearing, and which they pretend to admire merely for fashion's sake. At the Leipzig theatre, be it on opera or drama night, the audience has a peculiarly at-home look. All leave their outdoor clothing in the cloak-room, so that they need have no fear of catching cold after the theatre. Ladies are not forbidden to wear their hats, but it is looked on as a mark of ill-breeding if they do; and should a lady thus interfere with the view of a person sitting behind she need not take affront at a request to remove the offending article. Between the acts there are long waits, and the audience pours into the large and elegant *foyer* adjoining the auditorium on the balcony level, and promenades back

and forth; everybody sees everybody else, acquaintances greet each other, the hungry and thirsty refresh themselves in the spacious restaurant, and in pleasant summer weather animated groups gather in the mild evening air on the great balcony overlooking the Augustus Platz, which spreads below, sprinkled like a firmament with its many gas-lights.

As a natural result of the subscription system such a thing as the "run" of a play, in the English sense, is unknown at a court or city theatre. The *répertoire* is changed nightly, and if a new play or opera proves popular it is performed very often during the season, many times with suspended subscription, so that the subscribers may not complain of a surfeit. But as the subscriptions are largely in halves, quarters, and even eighths, and as it takes some time for even a whole subscription to make the round of a family, complaints do not often occur. And in consequence of the system of a changing *répertoire* a person in Leipzig, with its one hundred and twenty-six thousand inhabitants, has a greater dramatic variety than in London, with its millions.

The Leipzigers are very proud of their theatre, whose history is so closely knit with the history of the German drama, and have testified their appreciation very substantially by endowing it with the richest theatre pension fund in all Germany. Every actor who has been connected with the Leipzig theatre for six years, on his retiring altogether from the stage, is entitled to a pension equal to one third of the salary he was receiving at the time he ceased to be a member of the Leipzig company. This is naturally a great inducement for actors to continue their connection with the theatre, so that the company has a permanency which contrasts strangely with the continual changes in the stock companies of our theatres. The result is an *ensemble* of which one acquainted only with our theatres can have but a faint conception. Any intelligent and experienced manager will say that he can make a company of medium talent, whose members are long used to the same theatre, to the same public, and to each other, work to-

gether and appear to advantage better than a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude hastily brought together. But more than this, the high reputation of the Leipzig theatre throughout Germany, and the attraction of the splendid pension fund, place the best young talent of the country at its command. A young actor, for this reason, prefers to play here rather than at some of the greater court theatres at a much larger salary; for to graduate with honor from the Leipzig stage is a certain passport to any other. Many of the greatest of German actors and singers begin their career at Leipzig. A recent instance is that of Fräulein Franciska Ellmenreich, a young actress of remarkable genius, and of such brilliancy, grace, and versatility that her *répertoire* comprised the most different rôles in parlor comedy, the emotional drama, and high tragedy. She was alike good as Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew*, as Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, as Donna Diana in Moreto's comedy, as Juliet, as Gretchen, or as Countess Orsini in Emilia Galotti. She is now engaged to occupy a leading position at the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna, — a theatre which stands at the head of the German stage, and where the most perfect acting is found. The writer has often thought that if Fräulein Ellmenreich could be induced to learn English, as Janauschek has done, and make an American tour, a great triumph would await her.

While no such enormous salaries are paid as in America, the average actor is well recompensed, and is generally in comfortable circumstances, often accumulating a respectable fortune. The social position of the profession is also good; nearly all the old prejudice has disappeared; and distinguished actors move in the best society. Professional stars are almost unknown, and the stock company is everywhere the chief reliance. Even the most famous actors and singers are permanently engaged at some great court or city theatre, and at certain seasons of the year they are, according to contract, given leave of absence, when they make tours of two or

three months, their names appearing on the bills in some such style as the following example:—

RESIDENZ THEATRE, BERLIN.

ARRIA AND MESSALINA,

TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS, BY ADOLF WILBRANDT.

ARRIA.....FRAU CHARLOTTE WOLTER,

From the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna, as guest

Actors who are not members of the company at the theatre where they are playing are always designated by the name of *guest*, a far more appropriate and tasteful appellation than our *star*. The above is a fair sample of the average German play bill, which is remarkable for all absence of display, bragging, and exaggeration. Such vulgarities are left for the announcements of variety shows and the circus. Instead of a blanket poster so large that one needs a step-ladder and a rifle-pit to read it, modest bills are seen on the street corners in a German city, often simply the regular programme handed you at the theatre, giving the cast for that evening, which nearly everybody stops to read.

Ever since the creation of a national drama a strong ideal tendency has pervaded the German stage, from the time of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller down to the present day. The drama has been regarded not as an amusement only, but as one of the fine arts: the most cultured classes are interested in the drama as they are interested in an art museum; the habitual theatre-goer is actuated by the same desire for higher intellectual entertainment which prompts us to take up William Morris's latest poem, or to read Mr. Aldrich's new story. He is not attracted by the prospect of seeing some scantily dressed blonde cut coarse capers, nor of seeing Adelina Patti portray Zerlina in diamonds and fifteen-button gloves. It is significant that we have journals devoted to "sport and the drama," where we may find the points of Clara Morris discussed in one paragraph, while the next waxes eloquent over the charms of Lady Suffolk, or whatever else the crack mare of the day may be called. Edwin Booth and Budd

Doble are mentioned in the same breath. It is very much like hanging Titian's Ascension beside the latest sensational wood-cut in the Police News. So prominent has this feature of the drama become that many of our best people have considered it a sign of vulgarity to show an interest in dramatic affairs.

But in Germany some of the finest scholars regard it as an honor to become director of a theatre, and distinguished authors are ambitious to write for the stage. Since Lessing it has been so. They feel that a great literature should go hand in hand with a great drama. Shakespeare taught us that. But we have neglected the lesson, although the stage remains a powerful factor for good or for ill in our modern society. Gustav Freytag, the greatest German novelist, has also written *The Journalists* the best comedy since Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*; Heinrich Laube, Karl Gutzkow, Adolf Wilbrandt, Paul Heyse, Gustav zu Putlitz, Friedrich Spielhagen, and Paul Lindau, all famous in literature, are also successful dramatists. Franz von Dingelstedt is director of the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna, Heinrich Laube, of the Stadt Theatre in the same city; Hans von Wohlzogen, of the court theatre in Schwerin; Gustav zu Putlitz, of the court theatre in Carlsruhe. All of these are cultured gentlemen and distinguished scholars, and many others might be mentioned as occupying similar positions. It is natural that such men should have high ideals of what the drama should be, but at the same time they show a high degree of practical managing ability.

It is a pleasure to see the performance of a classic drama in Germany. At the Hofburg Theatre in Vienna and at the court play-house in Berlin it is the rule to give at least two classic dramas a week, and this number is often exceeded. And one of these two classic performances is almost certain to be devoted to a play by Shakespeare. It is a fact hardly creditable to us that to see a Shakespearean drama finely performed one must go to Germany. There is no run of Hamlet for a hundred nights, where people flock

to the theatre to gaze on splendid scenery, to see a great actor make a machine of himself, and all the characters except the hero murdered long before the end of the play. But in the course of the year the theatre-goer will see nearly all the best Shakespearean plays, with the minor characters, as well as the greater, finely sustained, and everything else in keeping. At the Hofburg each year the histories or "king dramas" of Shakespeare are brought out on successive evenings, and the example has found imitation at other leading German theatres. While the writer was in Vienna he had the fortune of seeing the second part of *King Henry IV.*, and it was the finest Shakespearean performance he has ever witnessed. Every part was in the hands of a good actor, the playing was natural and entirely free from rant and stilted pomposity, so that the drama made a remarkably powerful impression, making one feel the reality of the scenes before him. Not only is Shakespeare's influence great in German literature; he may be said fairly to rule the German stage, for the plays of no other classic author are so popular as his. The statistics of the Berlin play-house are good evidence of this. In this connection the following table of the 1463 classical performances from January 1, 1861, to March 31, 1876, will be found of interest:—

Lessing,	4 plays,	174	performances.
Goethe,	8 "	216	"
Schiller,	13 "	348	"
Kleist,	4 "	80	"
Shakespeare,	22 "	530	"
Calderon,	2 "	27	"
Moreto,	1 play,	47	"
Racine,	1 "	1	performance.
Bonmarchais,	1 "	3	performances.
Sophocles,	2 plays,	24	"

Of no other dramatist, either classic or modern, was a greater number of plays enacted than the twenty-two by Shakespeare. Benedix was honored by twenty-one pieces, and Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer by nineteen. In the number of performances Shakespeare was only surpassed by Benedix, whose plays were given 527 times. The giving of two or three short pieces by the same author in one evening accounts for the larger num-

ber. Of the different pieces of Shakespeare's, *The Merchant of Venice* was played fifty-four times; *Twelfth Night*, forty-seven; *Romeo and Juliet*, forty-six; *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, forty-five; *Hamlet*, forty-one; *The Taming of the Shrew*, thirty-nine; *King Richard III.*, thirty-six; *Much Ado about Nothing*, thirty-six; *Comedy of Errors*, thirty-five; *King Lear*, thirty-one; *King Henry IV.*, (first part), twenty-seven; *Othello*, twenty-six; *Macbeth*, twenty-one; *Julius Cæsar*, eight; *King Richard II.*, eight; *Coriolanus*, four; *King John*, four; *King Henry IV.* (second part), three; *King Henry V.*, three; *King Henry VI.*, two; *Timon of Athens*, two; *Antony and Cleopatra*, two. It will be noticed that several of these plays are nowadays never given on the English or American stage. On the other hand, As you Like It is given on hardly any German stage except that of Munich and recently in Vienna, although with us it is one of the most popular of the comedies. The *Merry Wives of Windsor* is also scarcely ever played, perhaps on account of the popularity of Nicolai's opera on that subject.

The great influence of Richard Wagner has not been confined to the opera alone. Many of his reforms have been quietly and almost unwittingly adopted in the province of the spoken drama, and his efforts in behalf of sincerity and truth to nature have not been without important results. In this direction he has been seconded by one of his most influential admirers, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, who devotes his leisure almost entirely to the drama, and in the little city of Meiningen with its ten thousand inhabitants he has one of the best theatres in Germany. The duke is regarded as one of the ablest stage managers in the country. His tendency is strongly realistic. Probably no other stage in the world can boast of such rich properties. As far as possible everything is genuine and historically accurate. Paul Lindau, in an article on one of the Meiningen performances, jestingly says, "I must ask pardon for calling attention to such a trifle; on any other

stage I would not have noticed it, but where everything is so faultless I was annoyed to see the magnificent old bronze candlesticks holding candles of modern white paraffine instead of yellow-hued, ancient-looking wax." Though the company has hardly a really great actor among its members, yet so thoroughly is it drilled that it produces a wonderful fineness and finish of effect. Great stress is laid on the chorus, which in Meiningen is no crowd of stiff, ungainly "supes." Each individual is taught the value of natural and independent action. For instance, if an agitated popular scene is to be presented the chorus does not stand around in a ring and raise the right arm with the grace of a pump-handle and the unanimity of a militia company on dress parade, shouting out, "Death to the traitor!" like a grammar-school reading in concert. On the Meiningen stage such a scene has a grand and terrible sublimity, and to see the company in a play like *Julius Caesar*, with their splendor of costumes and appointments, and with their magnificent ensemble, is like beholding a series of grand historical paintings. Another feature is their giving the words of a classic play with the greatest possible fidelity, and the rejection, as far as practicable, of "cuttings" and all so-called stage versions. The company play through the winter in Meiningen, and in the summer at Bad Liebenstein, a famous watering-place in Saxe-Meiningen. In the spring and fall, for several years past, they have played in some of the principal cities of Germany and Austria, and have thus had an important influence on the stage at large. It is to a large extent due to them that in most of the principal theatres great attention is now paid to the ensemble, and especially to the disposition of the chorus. And such liberties as used to be taken with classic authors are now much less tolerated. But the extreme nicety of the Meiningeners in regard to properties and appointments is hardly practicable in most theatres.

To such and kindred influences may be traced the tendency of the German

stage to educate as well as to entertain; classic dramas are revived and pieces are brought out which, long familiar to the reading public, were supposed to be ineffective on the stage. All these efforts meet with the liveliest interest on the part of the public, and when once shown to be practicable find speedy following throughout the land. Munich has occupied a leading position in these enterprises. It was there that Byron's *Manfred* was first produced, with Schumann's wonderful music. Three years ago historical comedy evenings, or "four centuries of the drama," were instituted with great success, proving very entertaining, and as instructive in dramatic history as hours of reading would be. Four short pieces, respectively from the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, were given, the manner of representation approaching as closely as possible the style of the periods to which the pieces belonged. In the first two pieces the female parts were played by men. The first piece, a farce, by Hans Sachs, was particularly interesting. The stage of the theatre represented the market-place in Nuremberg. All around rose the picturesque old houses, and crowds of quaintly costumed people gathered in front of a small platform, something like eight by ten feet, where the play was going on. Last winter another successful experiment was the production of Aristophanes's comedy, *The Frogs*.

The first part of Goethe's *Faust* was played long before the death of the poet, but until very recently the second part was supposed to be incapable of dramatic representation, although the first part, given by itself, remained an unsatisfactory fragment. But in 1876 Herr von Loën, the director of the court theatre in Weimar, conceived the happy idea of observing the one hundredth anniversary of Goethe's coming to Weimar by the production of both parts of *Faust* as a "mystery," with the triple division of the stage in vogue at the time of Shakespeare adapted to modern requirements. The stage was terraced into three parts, certain actions of the drama taking

place on the part most suitable. The idea proved most practical. It saved much scene shifting, and greatly forwarded the unity of the drama. For instance, in the first part of *Faust*, below and on the left at the front of the stage was Frau Martha's garden, separated by a wall from the street on the right. The extreme right of the entire stage was taken up by the cathedral; on the extreme left was Frau Martha's house. Outside of the garden wall was a fountain, and close to the cathedral was a broad and picturesque flight of steps rising to the terrace above, and at the corner of the steps was an image of the Virgin. On the terrace, on the right and overlooking the garden was Gretchen's house, with a street between it and the cathedral. About two feet above this terrace was the third division, occupied by a street and a part of the cathedral. One can see by this what an economy there was in scenery. First comes the scene in which *Faust* meets Gretchen on the way from church; then the scenes in the garden; the scene where *Faust* leaves the jewels in Gretchen's house and Gretchen finds them on her return, the side of the house sinking so as to show the interior; then the gossiping maidens by the fountain; Gretchen's agony at the foot of the shrine; Mephisto's mock serenade before Gretchen's house; at the foot of the steps, the fight between Valentine and *Faust*; on the steps, the death of Valentine, Gretchen clinging convulsively to the lowermost stair, receiving her brother's terrible curse; and last the dead Valentine borne slowly up into the cathedral, the people thronging in while some kneel outside, among the latter Gretchen, who with the curse upon her dares not venture into the sanctuary. The performance of the drama occupied two evenings, the first part lasting from half-past five until eleven o'clock; the second part beginning at the same time of day and ending half an hour sooner. Between the acts were long waits for rest and refreshment. Excepting the rôles of Siegfried and Brunnhild in Wagner's *Nibelungen*, there are probably no

other instances where such powers of endurance are demanded of the actors as in the parts of *Faust* and Mephisto, who are on the stage for the most of the time through two long evenings.

So general was the interest in these performances that they had to be repeated many times to satisfy the great number who came from all parts of Germany expressly to see them; and it has been decided to make their repetition in the spring of each year an annual feature. It might be thought that the great length of the performances would weary the stoutest spectator; but so novel was everything, so exalted the idea of the whole, and so glorious the conception that fatigue was hardly thought of. The scene before the beginning of the performance made one think that Weimar's golden days were not all numbered. Under the shadow of the twin statues of Goethe and Schiller on the place before the theatre, like New England villagers before church time, congregated citizens and strangers, burghers and noblemen fraternally commingled, and prominent among them was Liszt with his strange but pleasant face, long, silver hair, and flowing, clerical coat.

The custom of honoring the memories of authors and composers is widely prevalent. Hardly a month goes by without a performance at the theatre to commemorate the birth or death of some famous person. In 1876 the one hundred and twentieth anniversary of Mozart's birth was observed at the Leipzig theatre, by devoting five nights to his operas. And every year Schiller's birth is observed by a dramatic festival lasting several days. The house is always crowded on such occasions, and special subscriptions are generally opened.

Many German managers were as unjust in their treatment of authors as are several of their American brethren, until the writers, recognizing the principle that strength lies in union, formed the society of dramatic authors and composers, which now conducts the business for the most of the members of the profession in Germany and Austria, securing them justice and respect. Men such as

Freytag, Gutzkow, Lindau, and Wilbrandt receive handsome sums as royalty on their works, which are not run for a few weeks and then shelved, but are played at frequent intervals during the season, thus becoming more generally known, and standing a better chance of winning a permanent place in the repertoire. The Vienna Stadt Theatre yearly offers liberal prizes for the best original dramas, together with its regular rate of ten per cent. for a play filling out the entire evening, and seven per cent. for a play requiring an afterpiece. The average rate of royalty paid by the German theatres is something like seven per cent.

Happily for the dramatic art, the rage for one-man plays does not exist, and little paragraphs are never seen in the newspapers to the effect that a certain actor has ordered a new drama from some playwright, very much as he would order a new coat from his tailor.

The most marked individual characteristics of German dramatic writing are ideality, poetic sentiment, humor rather than wit, and freedom from cramping and restricting rules. In all these respects a near kindred to the English drama is evident. Of late, German dramatists have learned much from the French, especially in the respect of technique. Particularly the plays of Paul Lindau have a snap and vivacity which carried the German stage by storm; while the motive of intrigue, which in the French drama is apt to take the place of love, has not supplanted the Germanic tenderness of sentiment. The French influence is also very evident in Hacklaender. Mr. Lewes, in his book on Actors and Acting, makes a remarkable mistake in speaking of Hacklaender's comedy, *Der Geheime Agent* (*The Secret Agent*). Led astray by its quickness of action and its flashing brilliancy, he terms it a translation from the French, whereas had he given a moment's consideration to its subject matter—the intrigues of a minor German court—he would have seen that the writing of such a play would be for a Frenchman almost impossible.

Unlike the French, the German stage is broadly catholic in its tastes. While a foreign play is almost never given in a French theatre, the German stage seeks to naturalize the best products of other tongues, and no philistine spirit of jealousy begrudges them a hearty welcome. Norwegian and Swedish authors have recently produced a number of strong plays, works that promise a rich future for the Scandinavian theatre. But for the liberal policy of the German stage a grand drama would have remained unrecognized by the outside world. It was Ernst Possart, the director of the royal court theatre in Munich, who at once saw the greatness of Björnstjerne Björnson's powerful drama *En Fallit* (*A Failure*). Occasioned by the great crisis of 1873, the play had for a theme the short-comings of mercantile life. They were painted in their true colors by a master hand, and mercantile dishonesty was called by its right name. The fame of the piece spread quickly and it was soon known throughout the length and breadth of Germany, causing a deep sensation everywhere. Critics called it a grand sermon for business men, and said that since Schiller's day no such tremendous effect had been produced. Paul Lindau said, "To it we are indebted for the deepest and most powerful impressions which we have received from the stage for years." While Björnson has a high ideal and teaches a great lesson, it is remarkable with what simplicity his work is done. There is not a scene that does not seem drawn from the life, and every word is such as people use in daily intercourse.

When we turn to our own stage, what a melancholy contrast is presented! While talking with the writer about the condition of the American theatre, one of our most prominent managers, a cultivated gentleman who has a sincere interest for the advancement of the drama, made the sad confession: "Nothing of merit pays." And of course, however great may be the desire of a manager to do the best, while his theatre is conducted on the basis of a private speculation everything else must be subordinate

to the one object of making as much money as possible. With us, every theatre is a private business enterprise; and that is the reason, pure and simple, why "nothing of merit pays."

How shall things be bettered? is the question. That they must be bettered is undeniable, unless we are ready to confess a limited capacity for intellectual progress. The drama is one of the higher arts, and if in any community a great department of art be neglected, the entire culture becomes one-sided and faulty, unsymmetrical, like an otherwise fair body with one feature missing. And like the different parts of the body, the fine arts are so closely connected, each having so important a bearing on the other, that no single one can suffer without the others suffering with it.

We have had several attempts to improve our theatre, but on examination these will be found to have been shortsighted and ill-considered, and therefore abortive. We must go to the foundation and rebuild. The drama in America has hardly been in a more sorry state than at present. There is a lack of hearty interest on the part of the public; every actor of even less than mediocre talent seems to regard himself as a brilliant "star," and endless "combinations" wander from ocean to ocean, threatening to degrade the profession deeper than in the days when to be an actor was to be a strolling vagabond.

But how shall affairs be bettered? Some tell us we must look to the state for aid. That would, however, be too much like whistling for the wind. Many years would have to pass by before the men in charge of our state administrations would consent to devote a dime to the welfare of the dramatic art. The proposition that a city should in its corporate capacity establish a dramatic institution of the highest standard is more worthy of consideration. Many of our cities and towns own public halls, which are used for concerts and dramatic entertainments as well as for municipal purposes, — a precedent, surely. Then the attraction of a good theatre helps a city from a commercial point of view.

Strangers like to transact their business where they are well entertained. But then, on the other hand, many of our city councilmen are chosen for quite other qualifications than high character or good taste, and since these individuals have a reputation for insisting on having a finger in every pie which they help to bake, their influence would be apt to be disastrous to art.

Every large city should have one theatre where the highest art standard is maintained, and this would exert a powerful and healthy influence on the others. Let one city take the lead in this matter, then a spirit of rivalry would soon cause the others to follow. The characteristics of such an institution may be briefly sketched: —

First of all a standard theatre should be regarded strictly as an art-institute, and be placed on an equal footing with a museum of fine arts. It should be richly endowed, so as to be independent of popular caprice and the whim of the hour, and placed in such hands as to insure judicious management and the steady following of a permanent and systematic policy. The greater number of the seats should be sold by subscription, thus securing a permanent public, which in appreciativeness, discrimination, and interest for theatre and actors would be far more responsive than a floating audience. A personal attachment would thus be formed between players and public the artistic value of which could scarcely be overestimated. That with such inducements there would be little difficulty in establishing the subscription system among us is shown by the ease with which Mr. Arthur Cheney obtained stockholders enough to build the Globe Theatre, and that too without the slightest guarantee as to the character of the performances and the use to be made of the theatre. In consequence of the subscription system must come that of a constantly changing repertory, allowing perhaps the "running" pieces three or four performances a week, as at the *Théâtre Français*. The lover of the drama would then have an opportunity to visit the theatre as many times in the course

of a week as he would have in a month under the system of long runs.

A theatre pension-fund, formed by contribution and the receipts from two or three special performances a year, together with the reputation of such a theatre, would attract a class of actors such as now devote themselves to "star-ring," and their permanent connection with the theatre would insure an excellent ensemble. And to encourage dramatic production, generous prizes might be offered each year for the best plays, and a liberal royalty should be paid for pieces accepted, thus inducing our best authors to write for the stage. Such a theatre, beginning modestly, would soon

gain a powerful hold on the community, and gifts and bequests would undoubtedly flow in, enabling it gradually to extend its field of work, and also, perhaps, to include the kindred art of music, taking in charge concerts and the opera. Then would

"Music and sweet poesie agree,
As needs they must, the sister and the brother."

It is a great work, and many prejudices must be overthrown before it is accomplished, but when the right man comes and puts his shoulder to the wheel—a man who, like Laube, combines high scholarly attainments with a great organizing power—we shall have a national drama worthy of the name.

Sylcester Baxter.

LANCELOT.

How one grows old I cannot tell:
Are these my hands, so long and thin?
My voice is like a tuneless bell;
All day the spiders spin and spin

Betwixt me and the sun. Betimes
I have a fancy to be glad;
I hear strange burdens of old rhymes,
And blare of trumpets. Once I had

Such fame dark Lucius' face grew white,
That night on Lessoyne's trampled field,
When through the dusk, athwart his flight,
The lions grinned upon my shield.

But if I wake, or if I sleep,
And dream an idle dream, God wot,
Would I were dead, and buried deep!
Anon a voice calls, "Lancelot!"

"Sir Lancelot!" I lift my face, —
The world is very gray and cold;
Then comes a whisper out of space,
"He groweth old; he groweth old."

W. W. Young.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, AND OTHER NOVELS.

IF cleverness were the one thing needed in a book, *The New Republic*¹ of Mr. Mallock would leave little to be desired. Only a man of wit, and of much confidence in his wit, would have dared plan such a work; but though the author's interest in his own performance flags a little after his brilliant outset, his epigrams are not exhausted before the close, and we do not feel that he has miscalculated his powers in detail, whether or no in the present case he has wielded them effectively. The sub-title of the book indicates its plan. A young man of fortune and distinction assembles at his sea-side villa a party comprising all the chief leaders of English thought at the present day, — some typical representative of each of the contending schools. The disguises are so thin that even the American reader is in no danger of mistaking the characters. Matthew Arnold comes under the name of Mr. Luke, Ruskin as Mr. Herbert, Professor Jowett as Dr. Jenkinson, Huxley and Tyndall as Mr. Starks and Professor Stockton, and a certain Mrs. Singleton, well known in London society, who has published rather naughty and enormously silly poems under the *nom de plume* of Violet Fane, figures very conspicuously as Mrs. Sinclair. Then there are Mr. Rose, a pre-Raphaelite poet and critic, presumably Mr. Pater; Mr. Saunders, a particularly tough and unscrupulous young materialist, identified by some with Professor Clifford; Lord Allen, a modest and boyish peer, of immense estates and benevolent purposes; a rather hazy and sentimental Scotchman who has seceded from the kirk to join the ranks of free thought, and suggests George Macdonald; a charming Miss Merton, who is a devout Romanist; Lady Ambrose, a thorough woman of the great world, with manners so delightful that they impart a certain fascination to a positively de-

fective intelligence; Mr. Leslie, the intimate friend of the host, who gives us some of the keenest *mots* with which the book is adorned, but who is heart-sick over the death of the woman whom he had loved in secret, and so cannot openly mourn; and finally the host himself, Otto Laurence, who also fancies himself in a state of deep disenchantment with "life, love," literature, and "all things," yet who is swayed by romantic and reactionary impulses toward Mr. Herbert and Miss Merton. The fact that the author of the volume appears to divide his own languid and fluctuating opinions about equally between these two friends tends rather to confuse the personalities of Leslie and Laurence, but a little care will keep them distinct in the reader's mind, and the portrait of Laurence the host in the first chapter is one of the most caustic bits in the whole book: —

"He had considerable natural powers, and was in many ways a remarkable man; but, unhappily, one of those who are remarkable because they do not become famous, not because they do. He was one of those of whom it is said till they are thirty that they will do something; till they are thirty-five that they might do something if they chose; and after that, that they might have done anything if they had chosen. Laurence was as yet only three years gone in the second stage, but such of his friends as were ambitious for him feared that three years more would find him landed in the third. He too was beginning to share this fear, and not being humble enough to despair of himself was, by this time, taking to despair of the century. He was thus hardly a happy man, but like many unhappy men he was capable of keen enjoyments."

This reminds one strongly of that very polished satirist, the author of *Cecil*, and

¹ *The New Republic; or, Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country-House* By W

H. MALLOCK. London: Spottiswoode & Co. New York: Scribner, Welford, and Armstrong. 1878

so do many other passages in the book, but there is a difference of tone which is not in Mr. Mallock's favor.

Laurence and Leslie have a little *tête-à-tête* before the other guests assemble; and resolve that certain subjects shall be discussed among them, in a certain order, which they proceed, whimsically, to indicate on the back of the menu cards of the first elaborate dinner. These subjects are, first, the Aim of Life; then, Town and Country, — with reference to the surroundings amid which the aim of life may be best attained; after these, Society, Art and Literature, Love and Money, Riches and Civilization, the Present, and the Future. It would be too gross a violation of probability to represent any such plan as strictly adhered to; the talk was desultory and fragmentary, as the talk of many men with many minds always must be, but it recurred repeatedly to the subjects named, while it dwelt, as was also perfectly natural, longer than upon any one of them on the conflict, so called, between faith and skepticism. The party remained together over a Sunday, in the course of which Dr. Jenkinson preached to them a broad-church sermon, transcribed in italics at a somewhat merciless length, and Mr. Herbert denounced them for a lot of lost spirits in an eloquent and imprecatory harangue, while Laurence read them some extracts from the private journals of his cynical old uncle. Lady Ambrose favored them with the opening chapter of a novel, just sent her in manuscript by a young lady friend, and the various poets present were prevailed upon with no great difficulty each to sing or recite some bit of original verse. We can imagine it. We "do so with our enchantments" even here in the New World.

The literary peculiarities of those personages whom we know best as authors are hit off with very different degrees of success. Mr. Ruskin's, whom the host is represented as regarding with a sort of shuddering and inconsistent respect, are most cleverly caught. Here is one instance out of scores: —

"When God said, Let there be light,

and light was, and God saw that it was good, was he thinking, as he saw this, of the exact velocity it traveled at, and of the exact laws it traveled by, which you wise men are at such infinite pains to discover; or was he thinking of something else which you are at no pains to discover at all, — of how it clothed the wings of the morning with silver, and the feathers of the evening with gold? Is water, think you, a nobler thing to the modern chemist, who can tell you exactly what gases it is made of, and nothing more, or to Turner, who could not tell you at all what it was made of, but who did know and who could tell you what it is made, — what it is made by the sunshine and the cloud-shadow and the storm-wind; who knew how it paused in the taintless mountain trout-pool, a living crystal over stones of flickering amber, and how it broke itself turbid with its choirs of turbulent thunder where the rocks card it into foam, and where the tempest sifts it into spray. When Pindar called water the best of things, was he thinking of it as the union of oxygen and hydrogen?

"He would have been much wiser if he had been," interposed Dr. Jenkinson. "Thales, to whose theory, as you know, Pindar was referring" — But the doctor's words were utterly unavailing to check the torrent of Mr. Herbert's eloquence. They only turned it into a slightly different course.

"Ah, master of modern science," he went on, "you can tell us what pure water is made of, but thanks to your drains and your mills you cannot tell us where to find it," etc.

The sketch of Matthew Arnold, on the other hand, is perpetually blurred and injured by the author's own too evident acrimony. Only the mannerisms of speech and occasional dogmatism of the apostle of culture are suggested by the conceited apothegms of Mr. Luke; his wit and pathos and intellectual refinement, never. His poetry is better satirized than his prose, however, and the following passage, which Mr. Luke is represented as mournfully and reluctantly reciting on the lawn by moonlight,

fairly puzzles one for a moment between mirth and memory:—

"So for ages hath man
Gazed on the ocean of time
From the shores of his birth, and turning
His eyes from the quays, the thronged
Marts, the noise and the din
To the far horizon, hath dreamed
Of the timeless country beyond.
Vainly, for how should he pass,
Being on foot, o'er the wet
Ways of the unplumbed waves?
How, without ship, should he pass
Over the shipless sea,
To the timeless country beyond?"

The soft, voluptuous prattle of Mr. Rose becomes tiresome at times, but is frequently deliciously funny, as where in the midst of a melodious moan over the ugliness of London he says that among all the sights and sounds of the great city only one thing ever catches his eye that breaks his mood and warns him that he need not despair.

"And what is that?" asked Allen, with some curiosity.

"The shops," Mr. Rose answered, "of certain of our upholsterers and dealers in works of art. Their windows, as I look into them, act like a sudden charm on me,—like a splash of cold water dashed on my forehead when I am fainting. For I seem there to have got a glimpse of the real heart of things; and as my eyes rest on the perfect pattern (many of which are quite delicious; indeed, when I go to ugly houses I often take a scrap of artistic *cretonne* with me in my pocket, as a kind of æsthetic smelling-salts),—I say when I look in at their windows, and my eyes rest on the perfect pattern of some new fabric for a chair or a window-curtain, or some new design for a wall-paper, or on some old china vase, I become at once sharply conscious, Mr. Herbert, that, despite the ungenial mental climate of the present age, strange yearnings for and knowledge of true beauty are beginning to show themselves like flowers above the weedy soil."

These *dilettanti* folk play for a while at constructing an ideal state. The "new republic" is supposed to have been suggested by Plato's and to offer the latest modern improvement on that most grotesque and uncomfortable of

commonwealths. But when Mr. Storke has eliminated religion, and Professor Stockton poetry and romance, and Mr. Saunders has restricted the sphere of woman to the function of motherhood, and Lord Allen has removed the lower and Mr. Luke abolished the middle classes, and Mr. Rose has devastated all the homes which are not furnished according to Eastlake, and Dr. Jenkinson has blandly assured the disputants that they all think alike, and added under his breath that none of them think anything worth mentioning, then Mr. Herbert descends upon them in a thunder-gust of sanguinary scorn, and shows them that their scheme is both impudent and impracticable, since their visionary state would consist of upper classes only, and very vain and sinful upper classes, too. Whereupon they all gracefully accept his annihilating amendment, and indulge in a little light and well-bred laughter over the explosion of their too ambitious palace of cards. It is the rigid exclusion of earnestness which, despite the wit of *The New Republic*, spoils it as a satire. The successful satirist must either firmly believe something, or firmly disbelieve; it does not much matter which. Mr. Mallock would have us think that he does neither.

"I have no duties," said Laurence. "Did not Mr. Herbert very truly tell us so last night? . . . Herbert and I, you see, are two fools. We both of us want to pray, and we neither of us can." And then Miss Merton modestly offers to pray for him, and is politely assured that that will do quite as well, and even better. Mr. Mallock is invariably deferential to his Romanist, but if he is really, as later publications of his would seem to indicate, "going to Rome," he is going as a panic-struck fugitive, by the tolerably well-worn route of negation and despair. He certainly avails himself of no orthodox *point d'appui* for his present attack, and is therefore fain presently to give it over, and to content himself with manœuvring the flying artillery of his wit, in a manner sufficiently bewildering to his reader, but not very dangerous to his foe.

One can but suspect, also, that he found himself a little hampered, as he went on, by his personal relations with those living writers whom at the first he marshaled so boldly. It is clear enough, as has been said, that he has a grudge against Matthew Arnold; but what can we think of his attitude toward Mrs. Singleton? The book is ceremoniously dedicated to her under her literary *alias*, and the "original" song with which she is made to follow Mr. Luke's recitation, on the first evening after the party assembled, is as much better than anything the lady ever wrote as a clever man and a skilled literary workman could make it. The concluding stanza, —

"I shall know no more of summer weather,
Naught will be for me of glad or fair,
Till I join my darling, and together
We go forever on the accursed air —
There in the dawnless twilight" —

is rather mild poetry, but it has the merits peculiar to the school of which Violet Fane appears to be a petted pupil, — tenderness and a certain dreamy grace of rhythm. Whereas the real Violet Fane inflicts upon the world immoderate quantities of stuff like the following:

"It was a dream, and it is *dreamt*;
'T is gone — 't is past — 't is fled;
But oh, its spirit is with me still,
Though all besides is dead!"

"And when she heard of fair Elaine,
'Alas it seemeth hard,' she sighed,
'That he should let her love in vain
The hopeless love whereof she died.'"

"Cling to me, love me, kiss me — so!
And, warned by Love's delicious glow,
Forget that there is Death or Snow.
Again! Ah, — so!"

Here the versification is as slipshod as the sentiment is mawkish. But while the author of *The New Republic* distinctly flatters Violet Fane as a poet, he does, with equal distinctness and deliberation, discredit her as a woman; and here again — this time by way of contrast — we are reminded of Cecil the Coxcomb, and of the perfectly refined sketch in the first volume of that *femme incomprise* of forty years ago, who "whined her monotonous quail-call over the missing moiety of her life." Just so often as Mrs. Sinclair joins in the discussions of *The New Republic* she brings

with her an atmosphere of innuendo. She never lapses into real delicacy of speech. There is humor, doubtless, in the way in which she is made to play off her airs of unguarded sensibility and Sapphic abandon against one after another of the celebrated guests assembled, especially in the malign innocence with which she entreats that complacent Philistine, Dr. Jenkinson, to explain to her certain obscure bits of Greek erotic poetry; but it is a deeply disrespectful and sinister kind of humor, and the whole portrait is one of the most disagreeable performances in decent literature. It leaves an impression of something very like vulgarity, which neither the sweet and open mediocrity of Lady Ambrose nor the reverent reserve of Miss Merton can quite counteract, and which lessens the wonderment we might otherwise feel at the sort of English talked at times by these famous folk; inasmuch that we are once forced to hear from the "delicate, proud mouth" of Miss Merton herself, "I expect that we are more introspective than men."

If half inclined to tax ourselves with captiousness and prudery for at last flinging aside a book which has afforded us so much entertainment with a sigh for its futile brilliancy, sad hollowness, and perverted if not wasted power, a glance at the motto on the title-page, chosen from the Greek Anthology, may suggest that the author himself would hardly dispute our conclusion. "All is jest and ashes and nothingness; for all things which are are born of folly."

There seems too much reason to suspect that the tendency to proclaim ninety-two cents a dollar is constitutional with us Americans, and that the foregone silver-bill is but symbolic or symptomatic of an ingrained proclivity we have to shirk our responsibilities, to slight our work, and, in general, to get credit for a little more and better than we have cared to give. Why else are American *meubles* proverbially specious and shaky, American stuffs frail, American colors evanescent, and American novels, the very cleverest of them, never more than of cabinet-size when tolerably well exe-

cuted, or crude, careless, and unpardonably slighted in the making when there has been, as oftener happens, a generous use of really valuable material? How comes it to pass that in that little isle over-seas, where they use the same language as ourselves, there are hosts of comparatively humble and often anonymous writers who illustrate the strength and beauty of thorough workmanship; who know how to develop a character patiently and *from within*, so that it shall seem to stand erect and grow in stature out of its own vital force; and who can compose pictures of manners which in their temperate and deliberate fidelity are fit actually to shed light upon the history of an epoch; while here our best names are continually appended to labored trifles or to sketches of an hour; to work which startles agreeably and even gratifies for the moment, but has no farther use or significance, — work as brilliant and effective at first sight and as intrinsically worthless as a wired bouquet?

There is, for example, something positively grievous in the chaotic cleverness of a book like *The Sarcasm of Destiny*.¹ It is wildly planned, it is hastily executed. The heroine is improbable, while the hero, who is Yankee physician, French *savan*, Hungarian baron, and English peer all in one is clearly impossible. The action is lively but utterly bewildering, and the plot is preposterous. An indulgent critic insists that the tale has "go," but it goes nowhere in particular. It has only what Professor Tyn-dall would describe as the "promise and potentiality" of direction. For any fixed purpose, whether of art or morals, it is an utter failure, doomed to exasperate even while it amuses, and to be cheerfully forgotten directly it is laid aside; and yet, what wit is wasted upon it! It is all wrong, critically speaking, but the first half of it is abundantly readable. How very well many of the people talk; how picturesquely they dress and group themselves; with what grace and promptitude they make their exits

and their entrances upon their lavishly decorated stage; how truly and keenly they can even feel upon occasion! The scene shifts from the fine old provincial town of Urania to the Knickerbocker circle of New York, from New York to the seething Washington of Lincoln's day, from Washington to Paris, from Paris to London, then back to the camps and hospitals of our civil war, to Urania, finally to England again. In all these places the author seems at home. We fancy that if she would linger long enough in any one to give us more than the merest dazzle of a passing glimpse, she might be positively edifying, — so knowing she appears in the ways of the great world, and yet, to a degree, unspoiled and unspoilable by them. This may indeed be an illusion, for the bright woman of the past, — the natural bright woman, so to speak, — who came before female colleges were invented, was remarkable for nothing more than for her power of using a little knowledge as if she possessed a great deal more; and the delightful absence of pedantry, the truly gracious freedom from all painful responsibility about the arts and sciences in *The Sarcasm of Destiny*, marks its author unmistakably as an ornament of that earlier time. But whatever her social opportunities and acquired accomplishments, there is no illusion about the native ability recklessly squandered upon this erratic tale; and it is on this foolish prodigality in the use of material which the writer either cannot or does not deign properly to work up, on this truly American haste and waste, that a short and pointed sermon might well be delivered with the sarcasm of literary destiny for its text. Types of character are suggested to us in these pages by the score, in a manner and with a fleetness of succession which reminds one wearily of the mumbled "introductions" of society. There is a phantasmagoria of faces, yet they are almost all genuine types. The shrewd, kind spinster, the wise and tolerant clergyman, vague and elastic in his creed, but ardently zealous of good works, — the foreordained *dévôte*, spotless, heroic, and narrow, — the re-

¹ *The Sarcasm of Destiny; or, Nina's Experience.*
By M. E. W. S. New York: Appleton & Co. 1878.

finer and sorrowful idealist in politics, the gentle but merciless aristocrat Mrs. Peartree, — every one of these is worth study; but they are suggested only to be superseded; they are literally not developed at all. The social life of Urania is worth a careful study, — that seemingly by-gone life of the best kind of country town, so different in its leisurely and ordered elegance from the fierce and costly carnival, the strife for breath and foot-hold, which city life among us has everywhere become; and this author mentions it with a kind of affectionate regret, as if Urania had been indeed the heaven which lay about her in her infancy; but she merely mentions, and then her impulsive intelligence glances off; she has not the steadfastness to depict. She can give an episode admirably, she can tell a single anecdote or repeat a short conversation with great spirit, but she cannot construct a tale or even complete a portrait. Who among us can?

Is it the bright young author of *Kismet* and *Mirage*? Her first book certainly showed great promise, and her second is like unto it. In fact it is a great deal too like, while in some respects it is better. It is a product of the same impulse, — the strong mental and emotional impulse given by Oriental travel to an ardent, poetic, aspiring creature, hardly past the years of a precociously clever girlhood. How the sentimentalists of all lands have reveled in that tour of Egypt and Syria, and what pretty, dreamy books they have been possessed to write about it! — Laporte's Nile, George William Curtis's *Notes of a Howadji*, Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient*, and scores beside. And our youthful countrywoman seems sometimes to surpass all her teachers in the tenderness of her feeling for the sad primeval landscape, and in the eloquence of her descriptions. She thrills responsive to each new vision, and her glowing words are always ready. Nothing comes amiss to her, — sphinxes, pyramids, dancing women, pilgrims, crusaders, or saints, — the human passion of Egypt or the divine passion of Syria. What could be

better in the way of word painting than this? —

"It was a curious life, monotonous and yet full of ever-shifting change; for now the river ran past some low range of desolate hills of stone, at their feet a narrow strip of cultivated earth, — the all in life of some poor fellaheen. It was perhaps a patch of lupines, and they caught the faint sweet smell of the white blossoms as they rowed slowly by, the sails hanging loose and empty in the evening calm, until the river swept away round the bend, the mountains fell farther back, and before them the lone and level sands stretched far away, broken here and there by a pale, gray mass — a clump of larch-trees faded and wan, looking like the trees of some primeval world — that melted away like ghosts into the twilight."

"Or perhaps it was high noon, and they saw some train of camels, heavy-laden and travel worn, lying in uncouth rest upon the sand, or twisting their long necks to snatch a mouthful of green from the few scanty bushes scattered along the shore. Behind them rose a jagged line of hills, — the color and shape of gigantic ash-heaps; and the camels, plodding slowly, heavily on, seemed themselves a part of the tawny, shadowless landscape, — their thin, gaunt figures the embodied spirits of the desert's mystery. . . . But at last there came a night when the wind began blowing down the river once more, when the Princess and the Cleopatra once more spread their sails and flew like night-birds through a sea of liquid opal; for the thin white mist mingled milkily with the moonlight, and the river-banks were lost in a translucent, vaporous splendor.

"Love blows as the wind blows,

Love blows into my heart like the wind —

that is what the men are singing; Ibrahim has just translated it for me," said Livingstone to Bell, as they listened to the wild chant of the sailors, keeping time to the splash of the oars."

"They were sweeping down the stream to Philæ, sailing fast on a river of moonlight that wound whitely in and out between the fantastic rock forms, —

a thousand singular and distorted shapes of stone rising strangely weird and suggestive through the mist. The palms of Philæ were dark against the sky, each long feathery branch so clear, yet so softly delicate in outline, they seemed rather the ghosts of palms than actual trees. One of them, growing high up upon the bank, seemed to have caught a falling meteor as it glided across the sky, for through its tangled tracery of branches there shone a great white star. It was as though the tree had burst into some sudden glorious blossom of pale light."

But a fine feeling for landscape and touch in depicting it can, after all, only serve a novelist for the adorning of a tale; and ornament, as we are incessantly informed nowadays, ought always to be restrained and subordinate to the purpose of the work. Can this graceful writer, whom we seem to have every encouragement to call Miss Fletcher, — can she also grasp life and depict character; can she build a drama or round a destiny? One grand qualification for dramatic success she certainly has, a faultless ear, namely, for the small talk of the day, and especially for that of men. She lays little comparative stress on what women say to one another; she is possibly not yet a member of a woman's club; but her talk of men and women, and what is much more unusual in a woman's book her talk of men with men, is true to the letter. It is due to her unerring ear, not at all because she has herself any predilection for ungrammatical forms, that she allows her best-bred persons to say "It was me," and "I should have liked to have gone." And just so far as people can be revealed by surface talk her people are revealed, and we know them precisely as we know our fellow-travelers on a long route, and the people who sit opposite us for a week at the *table-d'hôte*. Their salient points of person and manners are hit off admirably in Arthur Livingstone, who was "that most useless of animals a fastidious American," who "liked cultivated people, but detested intelligent ones;" in Captain Blake, "a good-humored

young Irishman with a fine tenor voice, a decided talent for brilliant water-color sketching, and a fatal facility for talking about himself;" in Fanny Thayer, who was ever pursued by a devoted husband with a camp-stool, and had been "tired ever since she was ten years old;" in that perfect flower of cis-Atlantic Philistinism, Jack Stuart.

Miss Fletcher, then, has many good gifts, — taste, humor, sensibility, a ready use of dramatic forms; and they have all been consecrated thus far to the service of one darling ideal, — that of a blonde girl with blighted affections. In *Kismet* the girl's name is Bell. She is sailing on the Nile with her father and her young stepmother. She is engaged to be married to a good fellow at home, but meets on her travels an *enfant du siècle* whom she likes better. She makes a rather feeble struggle to be true to her vows, but falls into the other man's arms about the time that they reach the first cataract. They are happy for a little while in the hollow lotus-land, and then the *enfant*, Arthur Livingstone, discovers that somebody has been trifled with, and he casts Bell off, rather rudely. After this she is very sad, with the lavish and sweet sadness of youth, and all Egypt is sad for sympathy, and we are quite comfortably sad who read, for she sings her sorrow exquisitely. When the affianced lover discovers the state of the case he naturally releases Bell, and, at the very last, Arthur decides that he will take her, but the impression of delicious woe is hardly marred. In *Mirage* the fair girl's name is Constance. She is traveling in Syria with a fatherly friend and his young wife. There is a rather good though stupid fellow in the party who wants to marry Constance, and whom her friends wish her to favor, but she happens to have met three years before an *enfant du siècle*, a shade more serious than the other. His name is Lawrence on the hills of Palestine, and she has loved him all this while, seemingly with very little encouragement. She sighs for him throughout Syria in a pensive and rapturous fashion, and again the fine scenery is suffused with guile-

less emotion. At Damascus the enfant Lawrence makes his appearance, and they are happy for a little in the odorous gardens and among the dusky bazars; and once they ride out together upon the encompassing desert, and are pathetically near coming to an understanding, but miss it, and the enfant drifts away from poor Constance, and she sadly and absently marries her original lover, Jack Stuart, whom she does not pretend to love at all. *Mirage* is in a lower key than *Kismet*, but it is better harmonized and more truly tender. The tearful and immoral end is artistically correct. It is a symmetrical sentimental whole. Constance is not as clearly individualized as Bell, but apparently she is meant to be a little vague, for even her author habitually speaks of her after the opening chapters as "the girl," as though she were a mere type of ardent feeling and unsatisfied yearning; a vehicle for confession and the vain aspiration after happiness in love.

Well, so be it. There are baffled lives, we know, and chords that are never resolved. But one would fain be pardoned for doggedly affirming that twice is enough to have tried the same subject, even with slight variations of treatment and an artistic gain in the second attempt. One wants to implore Miss Fletcher to shake off now her mood of introspective musing, and ruthlessly to bury her dear blonde maiden out of her sight. Let her despise the flattery of her admirers and resist the teasing of her publishers, and study other folks, the world of action and the works of those greatest masters of human portraiture who have traced the springs of conduct and probed the secrets of conscience. If she would only do this, who knows but she might by and by write books as strong as these two are pleasing, books of which her countryfolk might be permanently proud? She has rare capabilities, not the least of which is that keen susceptibility which comes so near, at times, to deepening into passion, and it is not too late for her to train her faculties for their highest possible use.

No one would think of calling Hesba

Stretton a great master, although in her unpretending little story of Max Cromer she certainly depicted the last siege of Strasburg in a masterly manner. Hers is, however, a very modest place among those minor English novelists whose high general level is yet so full of significance for ourselves. This difference of average, by the way, was forcibly illustrated in the case of the first *No Name* novel which came to us from abroad. Nobody could guess who wrote *Will Denbigh*, but everybody knew at once that it was English. Why? Because the style was peculiar and the hand clearly practiced, and it would not be possible for one of ourselves to write so well without being distinguished. So with Hesba Stretton. Her fame is little, but her work is admirable, and her latest story, *Through a Needle's Eye*,¹ so compact and complete that even to one who does not much mind its earnest moral purpose it must be very restful and satisfactory reading. This is the plot: A hard and violent old squire, in a lonely nook of that picturesque English coast so familiar to us in fiction, disinherits his scapegrace heir who had run away from home at nineteen, and leaves his lands and name to an elder step-son whom he had educated for the church and made vicar of the little sea-board parish with an income of a few hundred pounds. This step-son, Justin Webb, afterwards Herford, is the hero of the tale. On his death-bed the old man relents toward his natural heir, and orders burned the second will, which he had made in favor of Justin. By a pure mistake the will destroyed was the earlier one, which had been made in favor of the absent Richard, so that Justin was left, after all, in unquestioned legal possession of the estate. No one but himself knew of the squire's late revulsion of feeling. Richard had not been heard of for six years; letters and advertisements failed to elicit any response; the parish was familiarized, by the old man's frequent threats, with the thought of Justin's succeeding; they knew him and loved him for his worth and wisdom, and

¹ *Through a Needle's Eye.* By HESBA STRETTON. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1878.

his generous identification with themselves and their minute interests. So he kept his own counsel, installed a former classmate, a single-minded curate, even poorer than he had ever been, in the vicarage, and entered upon the name and lands of Herford, secured in his possession against everything but the whispers of his own conscience. The estate doubled in value under his astute management; his tenants also prospered in the trade which he knew how to create for them; the new clergyman was exceptionally zealous and tender in the cure of their souls; outside in his little realm, which yet was not rightfully his, all was peace and prosperity. And in his domestic life also Justin was gravely happy. He had married early in his struggling youth, but his wife had lived only long enough to give birth to one fragile girl, who now grew up in the sheltered luxury of the Hall, a gay, delicate, spotless creature, the darling of her father and of the entire parish. But Justin was blessed in another kind of love. The strong passion of his mature manhood was given to a noble woman who amply returned it, and waited only her release from the bondage of painful and yet sacred duty to a worthless father to become his wife. The ruinous grange where Diana led her life of heroic patience was near to Herford. The lovers met often; their friendship was of the sweetest and strongest type which may exist between unwed man and woman; their faith in one another absolutely without a flaw. Then came the culminating year when fame found Justin out in his retirement, and maiden Pansy's innocent heart was won by the plausible son of a neighboring baronet, and the hand of the presumed heiress sought by the proud and needy father. And then, in the fullness of time, when the fair fruits of wrong had all ripened, the rightful heir came home. The struggle in Justin's mind before he can resolve to renounce his own position and blight his daughter's prospects is depicted with a power and solemnity which remind one strongly of George Eliot in *Silas Marner* and others of her earlier and simpler

tales. Here a distinctly religious motive is added, although never obtruded. The tale is always free from cant, but it becomes deeply serious in tone. The author does not scruple to enforce the text which she has taken for a title, and show the narrow and perilous entrance of the man whom ambition has misled into the kingdom of peace and spiritual honor. His expiation is a sore one. He retrieves his reputation in the end; he even regains his home and position in Herford after the returned prodigal has been crippled by a mortal injury; he weds his Diana, and sons are born to him, but little Pansy fades away. Her heart is broken by her lover's treachery, her health by transplantation from her native soil. She dies piteously at twenty, and with the life of his first-born the father pays the full penalty of his error. There is a depth, a verity, a sad *justesse*, about the completed story which no brief outline can properly represent. The minor characters are all clearly conceived: Richard, the half-unwilling reprobate; Leah, the village girl, who loved him so coarsely yet so truly in his prime, and served him joyfully in his helplessness; the Methodist preacher at the light-house; while the mother of Justin and Richard, and Mrs. Cunliffe, the worldly wife of the unworlly curate, are delineated with abundant humor. The action of the tale is natural, smooth, and steady; the style unstudied, but without blemish; the impression which it leaves wholesome, grave, and sweet. Once more our thoughts recur to George Eliot. That Hesba Stretton is less than she goes without saying, but she is not immeasurably less. Her very limitations may serve her as a sort of artistic defense. She has studied in the same nobly realistic school as the greatest of recent novelists, and excess of power will never betray her into a disregard of proportion.

The belief has been popular among us lately that too much moral is the ruin of a work of art. Those especially of our younger writers who are in love with the technical beauties of French *belles-lettres* have sedulously striven to keep their

"studies" pure of all moral intent, and he who leads his little school with so dazzling a facility, the author of *The American*, even affects *persiflage*, and gracefully lays, as we heard a manly critic of his observe the other day, "an immoral chip upon his shoulder."

But the notion happens to be erroneous. One of the plainest of all the plain reasons for that superiority of the mass of English fiction to our own, into which we have essayed a little to inquire, is its greater seriousness. Those English writers, almost without exception, have *convictions*, upon which, as on a firm foundation, they can build boldly, by virtue of which their work has poise and strength and dignity. Illustrations occur in throngs: the Kingsleys (both) and Hardy, the author of *Doris Barugh* and *Patty*, the more sensational author of *A House of Cards*, the author of the *Atelier du Lys*, despite her French flavor and associations, the gentle author of *Vera*. We may or may not adopt their specific views and heed their teaching, but we are sobered and braced by their earnestness. It doth not yet appear whether George Eliot's own stringent theory of life is true or false, but her immense moral momentum is unquestionable. Only Hawthorne and once Mrs. Stowe, on this side the water, have shown anything approaching it; and are not they our greatest? It may, however, encourage us to reflect that our headlong acceptance of the dictum, *no moral in art*, is probably due but in part to the witchery of France, much more to our own juvenility. What Herbert Spencer says of the development of the individual is true of the people quite as well: the physical powers mature first, then the intellectual, and last of all the moral. We Yankees have not yet got beyond the merely knowing stage, but we are on our way, let us hope, to a nobler.

And if moral sincerity gives force and temper to a book, so, of a certainty, does not sentimental piety, and Lapsed but not Lost,¹ by the author of the Schönberg-Cotta Family, is very feeble. The

world owes something to Mrs. Charles for her reverent and sympathetic researches into the annals of the Christian church, and more for her renderings of some of the great mediæval hymns, particularly for the most exquisite translation ever accomplished of that loveliest of all the Augustiniani, the *De Gaudiis Paradisi*. But her dramatic vein is exhausted, her sweet but thin voice cracked beyond recovery, and the scene of her last romance, the semi-Christian Carthage of Tertullian and Cyprian, is a region peculiarly alien and uncomfortable to the imagination. It is more so even than the historic Carthage of Flaubert's fiendish Salambo; much more so than the mythical Carthage of Dido's day, where we all received an acceptable part of our early education.

It is natural at present to compare all stories of Russian life with Tourguéneff's. This can be properly done only by persons who have been, so to speak, converted to Tourguéneff; who have *experienced* him, as certain sectaries used once to speak of experiencing religion. In the one case, as in the other, the process is expected at some subsequent time to render a man wiser, but it will inevitably for the time being render him sadder. The convert to Calvinism was overwhelmed by a sense of his own sins; the convert to Tourguéneffism is crushed by a sense of the sinfulness of Russian society. They have defied the gods and trampled on the commandments, these strange and powerful half-barbarians, and, if their most eloquent prophet tells the truth, there is literally no health in them. And why should he lie? What motive could he possibly have for blackening the character of all his countrymen? Has he not, moreover, the plain, dispassionate manner, the accent of stern veracity, the "note," as they say, of unflinching realism? We have plainly no choice but to accept the total depravity of all the Russians; nor ought we, by any means, to resent as pharisaical the air of melancholy complacency sometimes to be observed in those who have fully accomplished the mortifying feat, and who plainly regard reluctance and

¹ *Lapsed but not Lost*. By Mrs. CHARLES. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1878.

a tendency to cavil at M. Tourguéneff's statements as indicating both cowardice and levity of mind.

Nevertheless, when one has embraced the means of grace, and swallowed in unwinking succession *Fathers and Sons* and *Virgin Soil*, *Spring Floods* and *A Lear of the Steppe*, the dose is felt by the natural man to have been so big and so bitter that one is, perhaps, disproportionately glad of a morsel of delicate sweetmeat like Henry Greville's *Dosia*.¹ It is a Russian story, but it will add nothing to that mass of sombre lore which we call knowledge of Russian life. The half-dozen personages who talk so wittily and behave so naturally with one another, through its two hundred and sixty very open pages (for this tale also is of the fashionable cabinet-size), all belong to that highly privileged and triply-guarded class of society for whom life is much the same in every land, and whether they oscillate between New York and Newport, London and Scotland, or Saint Petersburg and Tsarskoe-Sélo. A wild and wayward, but high-spirited, warm-hearted, and bewitching little hoyden wins the love of a peculiarly grave and fastidious man. A stately and experienced woman, the sister of the first lover, bestows her oft-sought hand on the cousin of the first lady, — a young army officer, remarkable for nothing previously but simple honor and boyish vivacity. This is the whole story, but it is charmingly told, with an abundance of odd incident and sparkling dialogue. The fascinations of the

heroine are nowhere solemnly proclaimed, but the reader falls under their spell the moment she is introduced. We are not told that she is clever, but we observe that she is never outwitted, and she describes her dynasties of foreign governesses to the doomed dignitary who is beginning to patronize her with a merry acumen which actually illuminates the question of the education of girls, does good like a medicine to her stately and critical interlocutor, and shows triumphantly how much better in a woman is wisdom than the repute of it. There are no secrets in the story, no crimes, no sorrows. These polite and amusing people move by a sunshiny path to congenial destinies; but it need not harm us to be reminded that the sun is always shining clearly somewhere in the world, and that a narrow and transitory beam may even light at intervals upon the benighted kingdom of the Czar.

Dosia is a very little book, and we take occasion to repeat that a little thing well done, a little tale delightfully told, is by no means necessarily better in the way of art than a larger conception imperfectly wrought out. But symmetry and completeness are good things to remember and recognize, and there are odd minutes of life which we consecrate by preference to books which do not affect immortality. Henry Greville is the *nom de plume* of a French lady who has lived much in Russian diplomatic circles, and Miss Sherwood's translation makes us forget that it is a translation, and is therefore as good as in this case it need be.

AFTER-LIFE.

OH, boon and curse in one, — this ceaseless need
Of looking still behind us and before!
Gift to the soul of eyes that fail to read
Life's open book of cabalistic lore;

¹ *Dosia*. By HENRY GREVILLE. Boston: Estes and Lauriat. 1878.

Eyes that detect a light and joy divine
Twinkling beyond the twilight clouds afar,
Yet know not if it be the countersign
Of moods and thoughts, or some eternal star.

What taunt of destiny still stimulates
Yet baffles all desire, or wise or fond,
To pierce the veil, ne'er lifted by the Fates,
Between the life that ends and life beyond?

We sit before the doors of death, and dream
That when they ope to let our brothers in,
We catch, before they close, some flitting gleam
Of glory, where their after-lives begin.

And with the light a transient burst of song
Comes from within the gates that shut again
Upon our dead. Then we, the proud, the strong,
Sit crushed and lonely in our wordless pain.

Weeping, we knock against the bars, and call,
"Speak, speak, O love, for we are left alone!"
We hear our voices echo against the wall,
And dream it is a spirit's answering tone.

"Come back, or answer us!" In vain we cry.
Naught is so near as death, — so far away
As life beyond. They only know who die,
And we who live can only guess and pray.

If 't were indeed a voice not born within,
Some sure, authentic sign from unknown realms,
Some note that heart and reason both could win,
Some carol like yon oriole in the elms;

Though but a vague and broken music caught,
Heard in the darkness, and now heard no more,
Sinking in sudden silence, while in thought
We piece the strains, outside the muffled door

That leads into the light and perfect joy
Of the full concert, then 't were bliss indeed
No present griefs could darken or destroy.
Somewhere life's mystery we should learn to read.

Somewhere we then might drop the ripened seed
Of life, to grow again beyond the sky;
Nor deem the human soul a withering weed
Born but to bloom a summer time and die.

Christopher P. Cranch.

THE MOOLID OF THE PROPHET.

THE April heat was increasing in Grand Cairo. Under its enervating influence I subsided into a *hasheesh* frame of mind, and passed my time between the bath and the narghile, the victim of brief and fitful moods.

Suddenly all Cairo began talking of the Prophet and his Moolid. It is the birthnight festival of Islamism, the nativity of Mahomet, the chief *fête* of the Oriental year. Of course I was shaken like an aspen at the prospect: the bath and the bubbling pipe were forgotten; I thought only of the Zikrs or the dervish ceremonials, and of the Zikkeers, those bedraggled, petticoated fellows, with their tall, brimless felt hats that resemble inverted flower-pots. The thought recalled to my mind a certain solitary pilgrimage to a convent mosque, where the dervishes passed out of their dusty cloister into a two-galleried rotunda, — a solemn procession of meditative souls that speedily scattered and began spinning like so many tops.

Again I heard weird music; the thin, hoarse voice of a flute rose beyond a choir-screen of fretted gold. The husky throat of that melodious instrument seemed to choke at first, and the voice stopped short, checked in the middle of a note. It bubbled, gathered force and strength, and then poured forth such a rich, clear, prolonged volume of sound as startled us all into breathless silence. It was like an uninterrupted moonbeam, that long, delicious note. The minstrel took heart, and played marvelously. There was soul in his breath, and inspiration in his touch; there was madness in the theme which he embroidered with a thousand fanciful patterns, after the manner of the East. He knew his art when he laid that reed to his lips and trailed a melody through the whole range of harmony, giving it as much warmth and color as if it were spun out of the seven-toned shadow of a prism. It was impossible to follow the theme of the cunning flutist; as soon hope to track a

swallow in the dusk. It appeared and disappeared; it soared in ecstatic upward curves; it quivered in rapturous suspense; it sank in passionate sighs but half expressed, half inexpressible; it darted hither and thither in sudden delirium, a golden maze of melody; then, with a piercing cry that pricked the heart of the listener, it floated down through space, a broken, trembling, fine-drawn silver thread, lighter than gossamer, softer than carded silk. I listened painfully, but the angelic voice had faded like the moonbeam; yet still I listened, though the silence that followed was breathless and profound.

Meanwhile the Zikkeers passed within the charmed circle under the rotunda; made, each in his turn, a reverential salaam to the sheik, who was seated cross-legged on his mat at one side of the circle. Music again reverberated from the screened choir, — a concord of sounds not oversweet, and certainly less interesting than was the more spiritual invocation.

Gradually the Zikkeers began slowly turning, one after another, and scattering themselves over the arena, which they filled. There was room enough for all to turn in, to extend their arms freely, to expand their skirts like tents. When by chance two skirts came in contact, each collapsed immediately, and clung for a moment to the slim body of the Zikkeer before it was again inflated. Some of the Zikkeers, turning slowly, made the circuit of the arena. Some whirled in one spot, never raising their left heel from the floor, but paddling with their right foot continually, and spinning, each on his own pivot, for a good half hour.

Most of these dervishes were grim, mean-eyed, filthy men, past the prime of life. There was but one in the score who showed any enthusiasm, any sentiment, or indeed much interest in the religious diversions of the hour. The others were mechanical spinners, spinning from long habit, and with never so

much as a glimmer of expression lighting even for a moment their utterly blank faces. But that one, that lad in his teens, soft-eyed, oval-faced, touched with color that went and came like a girl's blush, — how he whirled, with his outstretched arms floating upon the air! His head was inclined as if pillowed upon some invisible breast; his soft, dark eyes dilated in ecstasy; he swam like a thistle-down, superior to the gravitations of this base world, ascending in his dream, by airy spirals, into the seventh heaven of his soul's desire. What wonder that his heart melted within him; that his spirit swooned, overcome by the surpassing loveliness of the mysteries now visible to him! Are there not promised to the meanest in that paradise eighty thousand servants in the perennial beauty of youth, and numberless wives of the fairest daughters of paradise, and a pavilion of emeralds, jacinths, and pearls? Shall he not eat of three hundred dishes served on platters of bright gold, and drink of wine that inebriateth not? And to him the last morsel and the last drop shall be as grateful as the first!

How the brain reels with watching those whirling dervishes! How the ears ache with the music that grows wilder and shriller every moment! The throb of the first-beaten *tar* gives rhythmical precision to the waltz, and it goes on and on till the eye of the spectator turns away for rest; and his feet instinctively lead him to the threshold of the rotunda, where a livid-lipped eunuch squats in the sun, knitting. You would think that the bees had stung those lips, and that the poor wretch were still writhing with pain. He is irritable; he snaps at a child who annoys him, — snaps like an ill-tempered dog, — and in a final fury stabs the youngster with his needles, and goes his way snarling.

All this came to me instead of the repose I was seeking in the deep divans in my chambers; but my reverie was cut short, none too soon, by the arrival of the friends who were to escort me to the Moolid. We dined in the best of humors, and with as little delay as possible we girded on our armor and went forth

to El Ezkekeeyeh, while the whole city was astir and the air shook with the subdued thunder of the glib-tongued populace.

A strong tide set in toward the field of the festival. We flung ourselves into the midst of it, and were speedily borne toward a bit of desert that blossomed for the time being under the spell of the Prophet. We passed in to the feast of lanterns. In the centre of the field stood a tall staff ringed with flickering lamps; chains of many-colored lamps swung from the peak of the central staff to a circle of lesser staffs; festoons of painted lanterns made the circuit of El Ezkekeeyeh, and flooded that part of the city with the soft glow of a perpetual twilight. A series of richly-decorated tents marked the boundary of the festival; each tent open to the arena and thronged with Zikkeers, both whirlers and howlers, performing their gymnastics in the name of the Prophet.

Swept, as we were, into the arena, along with some thousands of Mohammedans, whose fervor is at white heat during all the Moolid, it behooved us to accept, with so-called Christian resignation, whatever insults might be showered upon us. The seller of sweetmeats cried at the top of his voice, "A grain of salt in the eye of him who doth not bless the Prophet!" The dispenser of coffee dregs demanded thrice his legitimate fee. We were rudely elbowed and trod upon, and stared at by eyes grown suddenly uncharitable, — eyes that shot dark flames at us from between lids blackened with bands of *kohl*.

We saw it all: the pavilions hung with prayer carpets that had swept the holy dust of Mecca and Medina; the splendid lanterns; the groups of dervishes who had been fasting and praying for a whole week, and whose brains were fast addling. Many of the devotees were lads, brought hither by their relations who had been through this school of fanaticism, who had run the awful risks of the *Dösch*, and survived to encourage these innocents to make their crowning sacrifice.

Several of the small pavilions were

set apart for the howling dervishes, whom we found standing in semicircles before their respective sheiks, the masters of ceremonies. The howlers bowed in concert, almost touching their foreheads to the earth; their long straight hair fell forward in a cascade, and swept the carpet on which they stood. Then rising suddenly and throwing back their heads, while their hair was switched through the air like horse-tails, they cried, "*Ya Alláh!*" with hoarse voices that seemed to shoot from hollow stomachs starved for seven days past. How they barked in chorus, the delirious creatures! How they rocked in the air and waved their electrical locks with such vigor that the lanterns swung again, and the tent bulged with tempestuous currents stirred to fury in the fervor of those prayers! All night El Ezkekeyeh resounded to the reiterated name of God. All night the pensive whirlers, poised on one heel, waltzed into Paradise to the beguiling clatter of barbaric instruments.

Somewhat removed from the solemnities of the Moolid, the populace found every sort of diversion, — strolling players, improvisators, soothsayers, snake-charmers, and the Oriental Punch and Judy. High swings cut the air, laden with shrieking Arabs, and when the ropes struck a chain of bells that clanged noisily, the jingle of that high jubilee drowned for a moment the terrestrial hubbub.

It was agreed that E—— and I were to join the Austrian consul at his residence on the day following, and accompany him to the Dóseh. We went thither at an early hour. Dazzling ladies were there in Eastern raiment, with scarlet fezes on their heads. It is so easy and so natural to assume Oriental habits in the East. Gentlemen took coffee and the narghiles in the drawing-room. We were beguiled with music and small talk until toward noon, when we drove to El Ezkekeyeh. All Cairo had gathered to witness the most astonishing religious spectacle of El Islám. It was with the utmost difficulty that we drew near the site of the Dóseh. So dense was the throng already assembled that long be-

fore we reached El Ezkekeyeh we were obliged to descend and follow the *kawas* on foot, in single file, working our way by slow degrees into an avenue kept open by the persistent efforts of the military. One side of the open way was lined with tents gorgeously furnished and set apart for the accommodation of numerous officials, both foreign and domestic, who had been ceremoniously invited to witness the Dóseh or "treading." Owing to some blunder of our *kawas* we were ushered into the wrong tent, where we made ourselves quite at ease among the sumptuous divans that lined it on three sides.

The harem was present, under glass as usual. Beautiful Circassian and Georgian women sat in their English broughams, and were driven to and fro before the tents. They eyed us with marvelous eyes. They turned again to regard us, with a surprise heightened by much kohl; their glances were underlined, as it were. Who would have thought a houri capable of such worldly curiosity? Then it was made clear to us that there was an error somewhere, for at that moment a fleshy young man entered with a retinue of wise men of the East, and greeted us with a distant civility that smacked of Oxford. It was the hereditary prince! No wonder our lady friends fluttered the harem, while all unconscious they sat in the pavilion of his highness.

Our tent was close at hand; we sought it with the nonchalance of travelers who rather enjoy breaking the tables of the law. We were glad of the escape and of the occasion of it; likewise grateful for the slight shelter our tent afforded, for by this time El Ezkekeyeh was shrouded in a fine, sifting rain that sparkled in the sunshine as the golden light shot through it. Music (plenty of it) growing louder and more loud, and the roar of ten thousand voices swept down upon us, and then the rush of heralds crying, "Make way, make way!" and the dervishes thus announced advanced to offer up their bodies to the Dóseh. They hastened up the avenue in groups; each group was clustered about a staff deco-

rated with holy rags and saints' relics. All faces were turned toward the relics, — the haggard faces of the dervishes, who hung together with arms entwined, compact as swarming bees; sacred banners fluttered down the whole length of a procession made up of these grouped dervishes. Not one of the victims seemed in his right mind; the majority of them were idiotic. Their swollen tongues lolled from their mouths; their heads wagged wearily on their shoulders, and their eyes were either closed, or fixed and staring. Many of them were naked to the waist, turbanless, barefooted, and barelegged to the knee. In fact, they were of the lowest orders of the East, impoverished, fanatical, forlorn. They hastened to the top of the avenue, a part of those in each group running backward. When they had assembled to the number of four hundred, the friends who accompanied them separated each cluster of dervishes, and began paving the way with their bodies. They lay face down in the dust, the arms crossed under the forehead; they were ranged shoulder to shoulder, hip to hip, though the heads were not always turned in the same direction, but were occasionally reversed. Friends gathered at the head of each of the dervishes, and with the voluminous breadths of their garments fanned the prostrate forms rapidly and incessantly. In truth the dervishes seemed fainting with hunger and fatigue, and, as the crowd pressed close upon them, they would doubtless have become insensible in a short time but for the fitful breath afforded by those flapping sails.

I observed that the majority of the dervishes lay as still as death; but there were those who raised their heads and looked wildly about until their friends had quieted them, or, as in some cases, had forced them to lie still, while the confusion increased, and the intense excitement at the lower end of the avenue announced the approach of the sheik.

A few footmen then ran rapidly over the prostrate bodies, beating small copper drums of a hemispherical form, and crying in a loud voice, "*Alláh!*" The attendants, as they saw the sheik's great

turban nodding above the crowd, grew nervous, and some of them lost all self-control; one man standing close beside me went stark mad, and three muscular fellows had some difficulty in dragging him away from the spot.

He came, the sheik of the saadeeyeh, swathed in purple and fine linen, and mounted upon a gray steed. The bridle was in the hands of two attendants; two others leaned upon the hind quarters of the animal to support his unsteady steps. The horse was shod with large, flat shoes, like plates of steel, that flashed in the sunshine; he stepped cautiously and with some hesitation upon the bodies, usually placing his foot upon the hips or thighs of the dervishes; sometimes the steel-shod hoof slipped down the ribs of a man, or sank in between the thighs, for in no case could it touch the earth, so closely were the bodies ranged, side by side.

If any shriek of agony escaped from the lips of the dervishes I heard it not, for the air was continually rent with the cry of "*Alláh-lá-lá-lá-láh,*" the rippling prayer, a breath long, continually reiterated.

The sheik was stupefied with opium, for he performs this act, much against his will, in deference to the demands of the people; he rocked in his saddle until he had passed the whole length of that avenue paved with human flesh, and then withdrew into a tent prepared for his reception, where he received the devoted homage of such as were able to force their way into his presence.

No sooner was he past than the dervishes began to rise: some of them sprang to their feet unaided, and seemed to have suffered nothing more serious than a narrow escape; some rose to their knees, and looked about in a half-trance; a few lay quite still until their friends had assisted them to rise, when they were embraced rapturously and led away in triumph. But there were those who were perfectly rigid, who showed no sign of life when they were raised in the arms of the by-standers; and there were those who writhed in horrible convulsions, whose clutched hands beat the air in

dumb agony. One, who lay with his head at my feet was stiff as a statue; his face was emerald-green, his eyes buried in his brain. Four men bore him away on their shoulders, but his condition attracted no special notice; indeed, we were almost immediately whirled into a human maelstrom, out of which we were only too grateful to extricate ourselves with whole members.

Each dervish is entitled to two horse-hairs from the sheik's horse, one from the fore-leg and one from the hind-leg. Those who are injured during the *Dósch* are thought saintly according to the extent of the damage received. The others — there is a superstitious belief that no one is permanently maimed — are scarcely congratulated; the seal of the Prophet is not on them; they may return to the world and the flesh, as we did, with noth-

ing in remembrance of the Moolid but a faintness and nausea that embittered the next three hours. . . .

It was the night of the Moolid. The minarets were girdled with flame; the heavens flushed with unnamed constellations, the trophies of the Prophet's birthnight. Once more I threaded the narrow streets, and saw the fruit-sellers sleeping on bamboo litters in the mouths of their bazars, with only a net thrown over their wares to protect them from thievish hands. I saw mysterious forms passing like sheeted ghosts, wrapped in profoundest mystery. I marked the wild music that steals from chambers high up and out of reach; a flame twinkles in the lattice, and light laughter greets the ear as you steal away from the shadows that lie under the eaves of the daughters of death.

Charles Warren Stoddard.

GROWTH OF CONSCIENCE IN THE DECORATIVE ARTS.

SELF-EXAMINATION has become one of the characteristic instincts of modern civilization. It was not long ago that Carlyle described this instinct as a sort of moral dyspepsia prevailing more or less absolutely in all the grades of society. However this may be, it is true that, unlike our forefathers, we take nothing for granted. The religious passions, the social traits, the manners and customs, which we may have inherited from them, are subjected to analysis and discussion. Reason modifies them, and establishes certain types with which, in the conduct of life, according to our several lights, we seek to establish a conscientious conformity. Concerning art, however, for various reasons which we shall presently consider, there has been, until lately, a reluctance to bring to bear upon it any such reorganizing and revolutionary tendencies.

Hitherto, when those of us who have

been engaged in works of design have undertaken, in the modern spirit, to analyze our motives in any succession of cases, we have found that the standard of excellence by which we would measure our work, the ideal which we would approach, has been, so far as the form at least was concerned, inconstant, and for the most part capricious. These variations of style have not occurred according to any known law. Our art seems to have been in great degree controlled by some power outside of ourselves. We have found it convenient and comfortable to accept the dictates of this power without questioning, and our standard has been set up indifferently in ancient Greece or Rome, in mediæval France, England, or Italy. At one time it has held to some phase of the Renaissance; at another it has been absolute as to its Gothic; "all these by turns and nothing long." Its caprice has been curious and

unaccountable, and not at all in accordance with the modern spirit in other walks of intelligence.

This vacillation of the type which has prevented modern art from developing a style, in the accepted sense of the word, is the natural result of the increase of our knowledge of form and the growth of the archaeological spirit. Unlike any of our predecessors in art, we have been seriously embarrassed by the unbounded range and variety of precedent at our command. There is no phase of historical art which we have not studied; wheresoever and howsoever humanity has expressed itself in forms of art, these forms are at our fingers' ends, and are ready to seduce us this way or that according to our mood. The mind of the designer is preoccupied by innumerable favorite *motifs* derived from every side and every era, each associated with some phase of ancient life, and sanctified or sweetened by ancient traditions; each with a value aside from intrinsic picturesqueness, beauty, or quaintness; and all contending for new expression. Whether he has been engaged upon a composition of architecture or upon a composition of decoration, — which also is architecture, or the completion and fulfillment of it, — his energy has been concerned, first, perhaps, with the choice of types agreeably to the caprice or fashion of the moment; next, with the degree of precision with which he is to follow them when chosen; and, finally, — by such reserve of force as might be at his disposal after these exhausting processes, — with the adjustment of his chosen forms to his needs according to his best ingenuity and skill. Under these circumstances, the modern process of design, whether this exact order of proceeding has been followed or not, must be a complicated one, and must differ fundamentally from all which have preceded it. The exact character of this difference it is important for us to understand at the outset, to the end that we may the better comprehend the new and strange conditions under which art is developed in these modern days.

The Greek architect of the time of

Pericles had before him a fixed and sacred standard of form. There were probably dim traditions from his Pelasgic ancestors, and from Syria and Egypt. These were the only styles or forms that he knew, and his own had been developed from them into a hieratic system. He had no choice; his strength was not wasted among various ideals; that which he had inherited was a religion to him. The simple cella with a portico or peristyle, — this was all; he had no wants or ambitions beyond this; it satisfied all his conditions of art. But he shared in the intense intellectual activity of his fellow-citizens; his art had been developed in the same atmosphere as the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the drama of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. He was content with nothing but absolute perfection. Undiverted by side issues as to the general form of his temple, undisturbed by any of the complicated conditions of modern life, he was able to concentrate his clear intellect upon the perfection of his details; his sensitiveness to harmony of proportion was refined to the last limits; his feeling for purity of line reached the point of a religion. Hence the subtle swell or entasis in the shaft of his column; hence the eloquence and fitness of the echinus molding by which the supporting and supported members of this order were united. This molding was the gesture of Attic civilization. It coincides with no geometrical form; it is the symbol of strength and sweetness. In each temple it obtained a new form, adjusted to its new conditions, but still in harmony with the pure ideal. It was drawn in the midst of a deep silence, like an act of worship.

In like manner, many centuries subsequent the monkish builders developed the Christian temple in the cloisters of Cluny. All that they knew of style had been developed in a direct line of descent from Gallo-Roman traditions, and they, like the Greek, were undisturbed by any knowledge of conflicting forms. Their art was thus kept in the track of consistent progress, and developed with purity and irresistible force.

So it was with all the intermediate

builders. So it was when the Taj Mahal was built in Agra. So it was wherever there grew a pure style. So it was even after the period of the Renaissance. The development of styles continued strong and steady until archaeology began to revive, classify, and make known to the world, as a contribution to history, the various methods and forms which were pursued and invented by old civilizations in the erection of their temples, tombs, and palaces. Then there followed a confusion of tongues which has lasted until our day.

From all this it necessarily follows that the distinctive characteristic of our modern art is the absence of a fixed standard of forms. It is eclectic, and apparently has not encouraged us to reach convictions as to forms or styles. At all events, there are few architects or designers, in this country at least, who are content to confine themselves to the exclusive development of any one particular set of forms, as Gothic, or Romanesque, or Renaissance, and voluntarily to shut themselves off from the rest of their inheritance of beautiful things; and wherever any such exist their neighbors are not so confined. In this particular we do not work together with any characteristic unity of sentiment. All the decorative arts are subjected to the same dissipation of forces. At the same moment we are designing and painting Greek vases; decorating Japanese screens; constructing furniture according to our reminiscences of the Gothic of the Edwards, or of the Renaissance of the Jameses, of Queen Anne, or of the Georges; covering our walls with designs suggested by the stuffs of Florence and of the inexhaustible East, by the brocades of France, by the stamped leather of Venice, with arabesques and conceits from all the styles; and with these we decorate the interiors of houses which on the outside have been inspired originally from traditions of every era of art, as set forth in books, prints, and photographs innumerable.

It is therefore a common reproach against the arts of to-day that they are discursive, without convictions or enthu-

siasm; that our depth is shallowed in many channels; that we produce many and not great things; that in painting we have no masterpieces like those of Italy in the fifteenth century, or of Flanders in the sixteenth; that in sculpture the ideal of the Greek marbles, though shattered and defiled, is to us absolutely unapproachable, not in execution only, but in comprehension; that in architecture we cannot reproduce the perfection, the purity, and perfect fitness of the Greek forms, the grandeur and extent of those of the Roman empire, the idealism, the enthusiasm, the consistent and powerful development, of the religious works of the thirteenth century, the elegance and refinement and self-control of the Italian masters of the fifteenth century; that in the fictile arts we cannot approach the French and Italian potters of the sixteenth; that in fabrics we are still far excelled by the Orientals, and by the products of mediæval looms; that in furniture, for fertility of design, for perfection of execution, for richness of carving, we are surpassed by the Philibert de l'Ormes, the Le Pautres, the Boules, of France, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by the Gibbons and the Chippendales of England in the eighteenth. In like manner we know that antique gems and intaglios, Etruscan jewels, boxes, fans, and bronzes of Japan, ironmongery of Nuremberg, — these, in their several departments of art, are the despair of modern workmen; that in no respect of art do we exceed our progenitors. It would seem, in fact, as if our knowledge, our ingenuity, our industry, had swamped our art, — as if our art were in a condition, if not of eclipse, certainly of hopeless anarchy, and this while its patrons were apparently never so rich, never so numerous, never so ready.

But over these accumulating and incongruous elements presides the self-conscious spirit of the modern artist. The innocence and *naïveté* of the older day have gone by, never to return. Our ancestors perhaps "built better than they knew." But we can never do a good thing by accident. Each of us, in whatever style he may work, must nec-

essarily impress himself upon his design. We can never be quite lost in the style which we have chosen. A new subjective, personal element has thus been born into art. This self-conscious spirit began to be felt when the necessity of making choice among several types or styles was first imposed upon the artist; this choice implying the idea of self-justification, and giving an added sense of personal responsibility, which has naturally grown with the increase of our knowledge. During the existence of a prevailing or exclusive style, as in any time previous to the middle of the last century, there was far less scope for individuality of expression than now, when the necessity of making choice among many styles and among innumerable motifs constantly recalls the designer to a consciousness of his own resources, and in the new labor imposed upon him of rejecting with discretion compels him to an expression of his own peculiarities of thought and habits of mind, which would have been impossible to a Greek of the time of Pericles, or to a Frenchman of the time of St. Bernard.

Hermogenes and Callicrates, Apollodorus and Vitruvius, Viellard de Honcourt, Robert de Luzarches and William of Wyckham, — each of these concerned himself with the development of a type of form, and carried it on one step further towards perfection. In this type their individuality was lost. They and their brethren are therefore but the shadows of names. Erostratus, the fool, who burnt the temple of Diana at Ephesus, is far better remembered in history than Ctesiphon, the architect, who built it. Ctesiphon, though a great artist, was but the agent of a process of development in style; his work was rather a growth than a creation. But Sir Charles Barry, Alfred Waterhouse, Charles Garnier, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, of our time, built their monuments in the Houses of Parliament at London, the Law Courts at Manchester, the New Opera at Paris, and the Royal Theatre at Berlin; these buildings, and all other conspicuous monuments of modern times, are full of the personality of their authors, because they

are rather creations than growths. Even so late as the fifteenth century the Renaissance palaces of Italy, built by Vignola, Scamozzi, Serlio, and Palladio, do not betray the personal characteristics of their designers to the same extent and in the same manner as do the Neo-Grec works of Henri Labrousse in Paris, the modern Gothic of Scott, Burgess, and Street respectively, the modern Greek of the Scotch Thompson in Edinburgh, the "Queen Anne" revival of Norman Shaw, and so on through a host of more or less illustrious contemporaries, most of them changing their styles from time to time according to their moods.

Confused amongst a multiplicity of types, we impress upon our work a certain effect of breathless effort, and overcrowd it with details; our greatest and most difficult virtue, therefore, is reserve of force, self-denial, simplicity, repose. The artists of antiquity found simplicity and repose in mere fidelity to a rigid standard, — a fidelity untempted by the discoveries of archaeology, and easy because of the purity and perfection of the type. Their ideal was a divinity; their service to this divinity was worship and obedience. Our ideal is a museum of heterogeneous and beautiful forms, and our service to it is selection, rejection, analysis, discussion, classification, self-denial. Indeed, the modern artist is not the servant of his ideal; he properly seeks to be its master. Whenever, like a mediæval artist, he tries to render obedience to the ideal, the very perfection of his knowledge betrays him. However faithful he would be to his selected type of forms, he must needs breathe into it a spirit quite his own. If he would reproduce in his modern work the strong Gothic of the early Cistercian abbeys, he remembers also the refinements of Giotto in the Campanile of Florence. If he would imitate the elegant exuberance of the Ionic in the Treasury of St. Mark, he cannot forget the fine chastisement of invention in the Ionic of the portico of Minerva Pallas. Thus his work is sophisticated by his knowledge. He is like an actor playing a part. He

cannot conceal his effort. He is self-conscious.

Thus the modern spirit of self-examination, of which I have spoken, is gradually applied to art. The application of a rule of morality to the arts of design follows naturally, and is in exact harmony with the modern spirit of culture. I desire to treat of this growth of conscientiousness as the quality most characteristic of the art of to-day,—a quality which until now has never made its appearance in the decorative arts, and from which the most happy results may be reasonably anticipated; without which, in fact, these arts will become mere antiquarianism, destitute of soul or inspiration.

Conscientiousness,—this arises from regarding art not as a business, or an amusement, or an accomplishment merely, but as a duty, carrying with it certain moral responsibilities like any other duty. This is a modern idea; it consists in the desire to establish some constant and conscious standard, by the observance of which, in the midst of the enormous and complicated demands made upon the decorative arts in our day, in the midst of the embarrassing accumulation of available and conflicting precedents, in the midst of the new materials, new inventions, new creeds, new manners and customs, constantly presenting themselves, a new art made up of many arts may be formed and kept from anarchy and confusion.

It has been discovered that in every great era of art material has been used according to its natural capacities: by the consistent use of such natural capacities the arts have approached perfection; by their abuse they have inevitably declined. Thus, as regards architecture, in a district which produced granite alone the prevailing style would submit to certain modifications to suit the conditions of the material: the moldings would be few and large, the sculpture broad and simple, depending rather upon outline than upon detail for its effect; in places where the stone was easily worked, the moldings would be more frequent and the carvings more detailed; where

the stone was capable of fine finish, there would be a corresponding characteristic of refinement of treatment. Where clay only prevailed, there would arise an architecture distinctively of brick and terra cotta. If the stone of the district was coarse and friable, it would be used in rough walls, covered with a finish of cement or plaster, which in its turn would create a modification of style priding itself upon its smoothness of surface, its decoration by incisions and fine molding and color. Thus, Egyptian art was an art of granite; the mediæval arts of France and England were mostly arts of limestones and sandstones of various qualities; the art of Greece was an art of fine marbles; that of North Italy was an art of baked clay; that of Rome, as her monuments were a part of her political system, and were erected all over the Roman world as invariable types of her dominion, was an art of coarse masonry, in whatever material, covered with molded plaster or with thin veneers of marble. In like manner, forms executed in lead were different from forms executed in forged iron. Forms cast in molds were different from forms wrought with the chisel. Forms suggested by the functions and capacity of wood were quite different from any other.

It is no less true, however, as is well known, that in their origins the Greek styles bore reminiscences of the primitive arts. The granite pylons of Egypt recalled the structures of mud and reeds which preceded them; the temples of Greece remembered the wooden frames of the primeval buildings; and the early Gothic of France received its first decorations from hints in Oriental fabrics displayed by the Venetian merchants in the markets of Limoges. But when these styles reached perfection, the materials and their capacity for legitimate expression had been fully developed in each case: granite no longer resembled mud; marble no longer was fashioned into wooden forms; and limestones and sandstones were decorated, not like stuffs, but in such a manner that from a drawing of an ornament one could almost predicate the quality and grain of the material

for which it was designed and in which it was executed.

This quality is called truth of material. There is also truth of construction and truth of color. They all are arrayed against imitations, against producing in one material forms invented for another, against concealment of devices of construction; in short, against sham work of any kind. Thus a certain master lays down this dogma: "A form which admits of no explanation, or which is a mere caprice, cannot be beautiful; and in architecture, certainly, every form which is not inspired by the structure ought therefore to be neglected."¹

Such doctrines as these have been so often preached in the literature of the times that they have become commonplace. They sufficiently indicate the conscientious tone of public sentiment as regards art, and the designers silently but diligently endeavor to meet the demand for a moral art with all the accepted devices of truthful work. Thus, for example, we have had an era of furniture made according to a dogma of which, for this country, Mr. Eastlake has been fortunate enough to be the prophet; but as the conclusions of the dogma have been too rigid, its requirements too exacting, its illustrations of the principle of truth of material and truth of construction too literal and narrow, its productive power is already exhausted. The designers, failing to produce new effects, retrace their steps and repeat themselves, and finally take refuge in variations and modifications of the style, which are the certain premonitions of transition and change. There are *doctrinaires*, precisionists, *petit maîtres*, formalists, in this conscientious movement in the arts as in every other new intellectual activity; they are ready to push the newly discovered principles to conclusions too absolute and mechanical, and to expose our arts to the danger of a recoil. Thus the "Eastlake furniture," which excludes curved lines on principle; which makes the manner of construction, the joiners' part of it, more important than the designers'; which elevates the mor-

tise and tenon to the dignity of art, must in time, by very reason of its great show of honesty, like any other ostentation of morality, pall upon the senses. With our inexhaustible inheritance of forms, in which curved lines do appear, in which the idea of the designer is of more importance than the device of the cabinet maker, we cannot remain long content with such pious exclusions.

But with all this, the conscientious spirit once aroused in art is not likely to be put to sleep again until a great work has been done. The designer would not quiet it if he could, for it gives to his work a new significance and power; it enables him to defend it by saying, "This composition of lines or of colors I am satisfied with, not merely because it gives me a sensuous gratification; not merely because it recalls this or that motif in some of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of art; not because it reminds me of certain historic forms rendered precious by traditions and long use; not because it copies nature exactly; but because I know it is right. And why? I have reasoned about it, and can explain it by an appeal to your intellect. It belongs in its place, and accomplishes its object with a directness which could not be reached by mere intuition. It is not a mere matter of taste, concerning which there is no disputing. I cannot do otherwise than I have done and remain true to the conditions of my art. My forms are developed out of the necessities of my problem; they are not chosen because they are beautiful only, but because they are fit. Indeed, they would not be beautiful for my use if they were not fit. I have been taught by experience to distrust my own intuitive fancies and predilections for this or that form, for this or that style; they seduce me from the truth. I have been taught to discipline my resources; to subject them to critical analysis and discussion within my own mind before using them; to lop off what is irrelevant to my theme; to give greater emphasis here; to distract attention there; to harmonize the whole with the especial demands of my subject. I find that these conscientious processes, so far

¹ Viollet-le-Duc.

from weakening my fancy, so far from diminishing the interest of my work, in reality make my resources of design more available for my use, and render my compositions far more beautiful than any that I did before I had taught myself to reason. I now know how to be simple; I now know the value of self-denial in art."

Before the latter half of the nineteenth century such language as this would have been impossible, but now it simply illustrates a common thought of the modern designer undertaking to create works of art; it illustrates a growing spirit in all the decorative arts. The distinctive characteristic of the arts of to-day has been, as I have intimated, vacillation among innumerable and incongruous types. It is evident that no one can invent a new set of forms, conceived on new principles, which shall obliterate the memory of all that archæology has given us, and therefore that we shall never create that new style which dreamers and idiots have been so long asking for, but never will find. It is equally evident that our resources of precedent will increase with the progress of time. Where, then, are we to look for a remedy for the increasing embarrassment of our knowledge? What can relieve us from an anarchy of forms on the one hand, or from the ignoble domination of a series of unreasonable and capricious fashions on the other?

It seems logical to infer that as in the sciences the accumulation of knowledge never has been regarded as an affliction, so in art the accumulation of precedents from Greece, Rome, and Byzantium, from Egypt and Syria, from the Orientals and Spanish Moors, from mediæval Christendom, from the masters of the fifteenth century, from the châteaux and palaces of the Renaissance, from the revivals and rehabilitation of all those forms by our many-sided contemporaries, — this abounding wealth should hardly prove an embarrassment to us unless we are unfit to use so precious a heritage.

With this heritage we have tried all sorts of experiments. We have, for

example, tried the effect of arbitrary exclusions. The time is not far distant when the world of art was divided into hostile camps, some holding to one set of precedents and regarding all others as misleading and pernicious, the rest considering that safety resided only in the very forms rejected by their competitors, — some for Gothic and some for classic. Twenty years ago two architects could not meet without a quarrel. It was the "battle of the styles." We have tried this in architecture and in the other decorative arts, but have found that under such division we have made no progress. We have also, in turn, tried indifference as to the quality of the precedent, and masqueraded now in one dress and now in another, curious only in the perfection and accuracy of our copying; in other words, we have tried pure archæology, and found that it could not satisfy the cravings of the artist to create.

We are now at last beginning to learn that this great inheritance of forms is in fact the legitimate language of our art, copious, rich, suggestive, sufficient to all our moods; valuable to us not for the sake of its own words and expressions and phrases, but because of its usefulness in enabling us the more fully and elegantly to express our own thoughts and the ideas which belong to our time.

To obtain success in the decorative arts, according to this new light, there must now be added to the qualification of the artist a new and hitherto unknown element, that of research and learning. We are compelled to processes of reasoning in design; we are obliged to have thoughts to express, and, in expressing them, not to misuse an old language, not to confine ourselves to this or that dialect, to the peculiar idioms and tricks of expression in this or that author or set of authors, — much less to invent a new language. We design at last with a conscience. Modern art thus allies itself more closely with humanity than ever; it must appeal not to the senses alone, but to the mind and heart. Indeed, so saturated is it with humanity that we apply to it moral terms: we

say that it is sincere or insincere, true or false, self-denying or self-indulgent, proud or debased. Or we speak of it as a thing of the intellect: it is learned or ignorant, profound or superficial, closely-reasoned and logical, or shallow and discursive. Such should be the modern decorative arts, according to the high standard set up by the new culture. In this way, apparently, we are to create an art of the nineteenth century. It is evidently not to continue a mere art of correct revivals, now of this or now of that school, according to an inexplicable fashion. Beneath these superficial excitements there is growing this new sense of responsibility as to the real duties of art.

Thus, in building a modern church, the problem is not satisfied by accommodating a given number of worshipers for a given cost, with due regard for the decent setting forth of given rites in an edifice which is merely an accurate quotation from a given style, a correct reproduction of forms recognized by antiquarians as peculiar to a certain distinctive era of art. It is no longer sufficient that it is good Romanesque or good Gothic of any age or place. This is practical archæology, perhaps, but not architecture. The matter of accommodation, cost, and rites being the same, the question is, first, as to the most available material; then, what forms are best suited to give this material the most honest and elegant expression possible under the circumstances, adapting these forms to the local conditions of fenestration, exit and entrance, aspect and surroundings. The artist seeks not to invent new forms to meet those conditions; they will come soon enough if needed. There is a venerable and inexhaustible language of old forms; there are innumerable traditionary details developed out of the experience of mankind in former ages; there are devices of construction developed into shapes associated with the triumphs and trials of Christianity everywhere. With the fullness of this language he utters his thought completely, having in mind only the fairest and aptest expression of his idea. To

these processes there are essential, as we have discovered, not learning and research merely, not inventive skill and genius merely, not poetic feeling and fine sympathies merely, but all these combined, together with the usual technical qualities which must form a necessary part of the equipment of the architect. The result is inevitably a work of art, — not a correct reproduction, but essentially a thing unknown before, a veritable contribution to the pleasure and profit of mankind, a step onward. It is of course dependent upon the genius or skill of the artist whether, in using the old forms of expression, he avoids incongruities; and, while it is not of the least consequence whether he commits anachronisms or not, he must see to it that they are not offensive. He may put Greek and Gothic together if he can, but it is necessary to the perfection of his expression that all the details shall be reconciled one to another and made one whole.

The decorative arts, from the highest to the lowest, are decorative in that they are fitted for a fixed place, and in that place related, in either subordination or command, to the effect of other pieces of art. "All the greatest art in the world," says Ruskin, "is fitted for a place and subordinated to a purpose. There is no existing highest-order art but is decorative. The best sculpture yet produced has been the decoration of a temple front; the best painting, the decoration of a room. Raphael's best doing is merely the wall-coloring of a suite of apartments in the Vatican, and his cartoons were made for tapestries; Correggio's best doing is the decoration of two small church cupolas at Parma; Michael Angelo's, of a ceiling in the Pope's private chapel; Tintoret's, of a ceiling and side wall belonging to a charitable society at Venice; while Titian and Veronese threw out their noblest thoughts not even on the inside, but on the outside of the common brick and plaster walls of Venice." So also with the minor decorative arts. Their essential condition of existence is their subordination to a purpose, and there-

fore the modern standard requires in their design complicated processes of development, similar, though of course in a less absolute degree, to those by which, as we have seen, the most monumental and important results are to be reached.

In the completion of a room for use by the application of color, of fabrics, and of cabinet-work, it would be easy to prove that a perfect result, or rather a result of perfect fitness, the ideal, is obtained, not by masquerading in a foreign dress, or by adopting a prevailing fashion of forms or tints, or by any arbitrary inclusions or exclusions whatsoever, but by a study of the peculiar needs and uses of the room, its aspect, its shape, and its surroundings; by the discovery of the key of color necessary to the case; by the survey of available precedents for motifs and suggestions of form; by the conscientious and intelligent rejection of every fancy which, however dear to us, however fashionable, however picturesque, or original, or graceful, is not essential to the realization of this ideal. We know of innumerable rooms, decorated in innumerable ways, by innumerable devices, under all degrees and varieties of civilizations, ancient and modern, and according to all conditions of living. These are importunate in suggesting ideas to the modern designer. Without the exercise of the virtue of self-denial he is at the mercy of these thronging fancies, and becomes a mere superficial eclectic. This virtue must be a leading characteristic of the new discipline which we are approaching, both in the greater and lesser arts of decoration. The obvious necessity of exercising it, if we would create works of art, is another proof of the intense self-consciousness which we must inject into our work. We cannot decorate a panel in these modern days in any spirit but that of self-consciousness. If this takes the form of complacency in our own skill or knack, confidence in tricks of color or form which we have picked up, imitations of what has constituted other people's success, we can have no real success of our own. If the self-

consciousness is conscientious; if it rejects the temptations of its own genius and knowledge; if it considers first the function of this especial panel, its position and surroundings, treating it according to the natural capacity of the material,—if of metal, adjusting the form of the decoration so that it may be beaten, chiseled, engraved, or cast into shape; if of clay or plaster, so that the form may be developed by modeling; if of wood, so that it may be carved or painted,—and, whether the composition is executed in form or color according to these conditions, if this form or color is kept properly subordinate to the rest of the composition, and is content simply to illustrate or decorate the function of the panel as an essential part of a greater whole, we may hope to create a work of art.

Moreover, how has the human mind in previous conditions of life met similar requirements? Let us take a long, upright panel and consider this point. An Egyptian would have formulated his work according to his religion, and filled his panel with a composition of reeds and lotus flowers, dead with straightness, rigid, precise, hieratic. A Greek would have contented himself with a wild honeysuckle, but would have extracted from it the very essence of beauty, grave, sweet, corrected, and chastened to the last limit of refined expression. A Roman would have chosen the acanthus and the olive, and would have given to them exuberance, vigor, sensuousness, abundance of life and motion, pride, and vainglory. A monastic designer of the twelfth century would have chosen the common leaves and flowers of the wayside, and with worshipful soul and obedient hand would have interpreted nature so that his panel would have been made beautiful with the spirit of the plant. A lay architect of the fourteenth century would have given a consummate image of what such leaves and flowers should be if they had been created for the sake of his panel; their shapes and their motions would have been adjusted to the form of his panel, conventionalized and crowded. A cent-

ury later, he would have crumpled, twisted, and undercut the leaves with dangerous perfection of craftsmanship, and they would have wandered wanton outside the limits of the panel; strange animals would have been seen chasing one another among the leafage. An architect of the Renaissance would have remembered the Roman work; but the Roman acanthus and olive, under his hands, would have been quickened and refined with new detail, new motion, finer inspiration and invention. They would have received a new impulse of life, a new creation, in the self-conscious spirit of the artist. He would have breathed into them his own personality, so that they would have been, as it were, the signature of his genius. But the art would still have been pagan art; not necessarily exuberant and ostentatious, but subdued to a strict relationship with the borders of the panel, observant of the centre line, illustrated with pedantic conceits of birds, masks, animals, boys, garlands, and pendants. For it was the era of the Renaissance of learning, the era of *concetti* in literature as well as art. The decorator of the Elizabethan era would have frankly left nature, and covered his panel with armorial bearings and grotesque emblazonments, with accessories of strap-work curled and slashed capriciously. The Saracen would have filled it with his arabesque tangles and pious texts. The Japanese, following immemorial traditions of art, perfected by successive generations working loyally, consummate interpreters of natural forms, would have disregarded any considerations of symmetry, and projected into the field of the panel a spray of natural leafage from some accidental point in the boundary, cutting across a background of irregular horizontal or zigzag bars; a quick flight of birds would stretch their wings across the disk of a white moon, or a stork would stand contemplative upon one leg in the midst of his water reeds, with the sacred Fusami in the distance, barred with its conventional clouds; and yet the composition would be suited to no other shape or size than that of the long panel for which it was composed.

In the presence of all these crowding images, the modern designer stands asking, "Which shall I choose, what shall I reject, and why?" They are all his; they are his rightful inheritance, the legitimate language of his art. He not only has all the beautiful things in nature at his command, but he also knows how they have been used by his predecessors; how they have been interpreted and transformed in the service of humanity; how they have been sanctified by old religions, conventionalized and revitalized according to the knowledge, the inspiration, the needs, the opportunities, the emotions of mankind. They have become an expression of humanity, and thus, as we have said, a language of art.

Mr. Ruskin, in a lecture at the Kensington Museum, asserts, with his usual dogmatic force and confidence, "that no great school of art ever yet existed which had not for primal aim the representation of some natural fact as truly as possible." Accordingly, he directs his disciples to the minute study of leaf and flower, grasses and pebbles, shells and mosses. He tells them to look into the rock for its crystals, and to look up at the sky for its clouds; to draw them all with delicate care, to carve or paint them with absolute fidelity; for by such processes alone can the secret of decorative art be revealed. All this experience doubtless is excellent, and to a degree indispensable. But how this drawing and carving have been done by our predecessors; how they have interpreted nature according to all the moods and emotions of the human soul, and under all the conditions of life; how they have made it a part of the history of mankind, conventionalized it, in fact, for the uses of art,—this is no less important. The artists who practice design and the theorists who dream of it naturally disagree. What! cry the latter, must we go to art when we have infinite nature all around us? When the clover and the daisy grow in the clod beneath our feet; when the sagittaria, with its pointed leaves, the water-cress, and the long reeds wave by the river's brim, and the

white lily floats upon its bosom; when the oak leaf and the acorn help to form the shade in which we repose, — must we go afar to learn how these things were carved by forgotten hands upon the capitals and corbels, in the spandrels and panels and friezes, of sacred buildings, six hundred years ago; or to discover in what way they made beautiful the oaken screens and cabinets in the châteaux of the sixteenth century; or how they were beaten and twisted out of ductile iron in the balconies of Venice, or molded, baked, and colored in the potteries of Palissy and of Sèvres; how they were painted upon the fans or cast on the bronze vases of Japan? On the other hand, the artist says, What are we to do with our heritage of forms? Are we to leave them to the antiquaries to label and classify and set up in museums, or are we to abandon them to quacks and pretenders, the spendthrifts of art, to be worn by them as savages wear the costumes of civilization? In any event, they cannot be forgotten. Every day they are made more accessible. The instinct of mankind is to use them, and we must see to it that they are used in a manner consistent with the dignity of art, with far-reaching research, but with self-control, self-denial, and conscience.

Thus there are two great books of reference for the artist: the book of nature and the book of art, that is, the book of the interpretation of nature by mankind. If we could close the latter and forget it, and if nature were our only resource, the best of us would perhaps become pre-Raphaelite, and we would peep and botanize in a manner commendable to this great prophet. Much of a certain class of errors might be obliterated from modern art; but our imagination, untrained, undisciplined, without food of immemorial experience, would run into unreasonable excesses. The opportunity and the desire to ornament would not be less, but the available resources would be infinitely impoverished. Our observation of nature would doubtless become quickened, but the element of conscience in art would be deadened, if not destroyed. The decorator would soon per-

ceive that the natural form could not be sculptured upon his capital, or painted upon his ceiling, or woven in his fabric, or burned into his porcelain, for a thousand obvious reasons, without undergoing some process of transformation. The work of conventionalizing these forms would at once begin; but in the absence of instruction and inspiration from all precedent art it would develop slowly, painfully, with barbarous imperfections and childish crudities. Our art would be a strange mixture: there would be, on the one hand, an absolute fidelity to natural forms, interpreted with the skill which would result from concentration of thought; and on the other, a more prevalent element of barbarous and illiterate invention, covering the surfaces of things with thoughtless repetitions of detail, like an Indian paddle. We would be relieved from our embarrassments of precedent, indeed, but we would suffer from a new and greater embarrassment of poverty. The embarrassments of our wealth we are now learning to correct by cultivating the ennobling qualities of self-denial and conscientiousness. The embarrassments of poverty could only engender an overworking, and consequently a debasement, of the powers of imagination. Man, with an infinity of thought to express, — for no fate but death could stop the activity of the mind, — would have no competent language with which to express it. He could only utter inarticulate cries, like a child.

Therefore, to say that nature is the only fountain of art is incorrect. Ruskin, illustrating this principle, says, "If the designer of furniture, of cups and vases, of dress patterns and the like, exercises himself continually in the imitation of natural form in some leading division of his work, then, holding by this stem of life, he may pass down into all kinds of merely geometrical or formal design with perfect safety and with noble results. . . . But once quit hold of this living stem, and set yourself to the designing of ornamentation, either in the ignorant play of your own heartless fancy, as the Indian does, or according to received application of heart-

less laws, as the modern European does, and there is but one word for you, — death; death of every healthy faculty and of every noble intelligence; incapacity of understanding one great work that man has ever done, or of doing anything that it shall be helpful for him to behold."¹ There is much more of this very beautiful language, but when we get away from the spell of it and return to facts it seems as if we had been listening to a sort of pantheistic hymn. To go to nature for refreshment and inspiration is always wise; but there is refreshment and inspiration also in the works of man. After God had made the green things of earth and all the animals, the creeping and swimming creatures, he made man, and endowed him with faculties to appreciate, enjoy, and command the rest of the creation. The result was that man immediately began a creation of his own, — a creation of the second order. His materials were not chaos and darkness, but light and nature. The result of this secondary creation is art. To us of the nineteenth century, for whom have been preserved most of the productions of this secondary creation, not by dim tradition but by scientific researches above and beneath the ground far and near, accurately collated, analyzed, and published, — to us, richly endowed as none of our predecessors have been (for literature has only discovered the true art of Greece and Syria, of Japan and India, for example, within the last twenty-five years), this secondary creation stands as the image of the primary creation in the human mind; and the human mind, doubtless, is the masterpiece of the supreme creator. By this agency nature has undergone wonderful transformations; and although the water-lily of Egypt, the

acanthus and honeysuckle of Attica, the olive and laurel of Rome, the trefoil, the ivy, the oak, of the Christian builders, the inexhaustible flora of later times, and all the animal creation, from man to insects, by the processes of art have taken new shapes, — although they have been often modeled in "the light that never was on sea or land," it is not wise to stigmatize these "old things made new" as the product of heartless laws, and as a conspiracy against nature. There is, in fact, as much nature in the minds which have thus idealized and conventionalized natural forms as there is in the natural forms themselves; and those minds and all the forms of art in which their thoughts have been embodied can no more be neglected by the modern designer than can the primary creation itself.

This is the thought which I would enforce. Our present conditions of life must give to art in all its forms certain distinctive characteristics. These conditions require the establishment of principles, and not forms, as standards of excellent work. They make forms the language and not the end of art; and they inculcate the enlargement and enrichment of this language by the study of nature and of all the antecedent arts, to the end that we may express our thought in art as we would in literature, with an elegance, precision, and completeness commensurate with our larger opportunities and our greater resources. Modern design, especially in architecture, has hitherto concerned itself with the parts of speech, and given us exercises in grammar. Now we are prepared to give to art its true function; to instruct as well as to delight; to appeal to the intellect and heart as well as to the taste; to have larger scope and fuller meaning in all its expressions.

Henry Van Brunt.

¹ Ruskin, *The Two Paths*, pages 46, 47

REELFOOT LAKE.

THERE are changing fashions in the public taste for natural beauties as well as for the devices of art. At present the tourist tide sets away from our rivers, and unless they can disport themselves in a waterfall they have little chance of admiration. But the time will come when our wonderful streams will get their due of affectionate regard; when it will be seen that the great rivers of the continent are after all its chiefest glory. Thirty years ago the Mississippi had its rights as the great way over which all the tide of our Western life must flow; but the growth of the iron roads and the change that they have brought in trade have left it comparatively deserted. One of its many unconsidered beauties I wish to make known to those who are willing to seek the beautiful even when it comes in a questionable shape.

The summer of 1874 was one of surpassing warmth and drought throughout the whole of the Mississippi Valley: the heated and shrunken streams were pouring a lessened tide into the main rivers; the Mississippi itself was well drawn within its banks, and the vast forests of its delta had been so far drained of their waters that there was a chance of getting further into their shadowy depths than ever before. As I had long desired to see something of the swamp region of Western Kentucky and Tennessee, I determined to brave the intense malaria that comes from the unnatural baring of the morasses, and make a journey through them. My summer's work had been in the westernmost of the table-lands of Kentucky, a heated region, where the bare ground was an overwarm bed at night with nothing over the body but the air; yet it is a healthful district, rich in noble streams of the purest water, and quite free from malaria; so the change to the swamp belt is like a passage from the Alban Hills to the Pontine Marshes.

The delta of the Mississippi begins at

Cairo; above that point its waters cut through table-lands and keep a little of the vigor that came with them from the mountains; but after the Ohio and Upper Mississippi join their floods their course is through the land of their own building, made but to be swept away by their ever-wandering stream, as it creeps over the thousand miles that lead to the sea. Even at Cairo the half-finished land has the temporary look that belongs to all deltas; the narrow peninsula that divides the two rivers wastes on both sides in the streams rushing on to their confluence. Imagine New York a spot of uneasy sand, with the North and East river a whirl of eddying and undermining waters, and you have the position of Cairo. Geography has done its best to make Cairo great, but the forlorn place seems to have profited little thereby. There is a look of disappointed ambition in its streets, that unhappy aspect of unrealized greatness that hangs over a thousand or so towns west of the Alleghanies. The death of the Mississippi River trade seems to have conspired with flood and shifting sands to avoid the augury of greatness that is in its name. It is but fifty miles down the river to Hickman, where I was to begin my search in the swamps, but there was no certainty of a steamer for days to come. The only way is by rail twenty miles out into Missouri, then back across the river in a zigzag into Kentucky, and then by another double to Hickman. The first thing is to cross the river on the ferry to the Missouri shore; although the river is at its lowest stage, it is scarce ten feet below the levees at Cairo and the yellow tide is gnawing away the land wherever the clinging willows allow the waste. On the Missouri side the landing place, a newly graded way down a bank of twenty feet in height was fast stepping into the whirling water. For hundreds of yards the face of the cliff was all covered with the fresh scars of the land

slides, and the wash of the steamer made the water cut out the support of several great masses that slipped at once out of sight in the stream. Several pieces of clumsy engineering, designed to stop the waste, showed their ruins above the level of the river. The railway leads directly away from the river into the back swamps. It starts on land that is always above the floods, as is much of the rim of land along the river, but a short distance carries us down into the swamp levels, and then, for the remainder of several hours' journey, our way is continually through the marvelous mixture of luxuriance and decay found only in these great morasses. The whole region seems even in this season of drought a strange tangle of water and land. The railway runs on interminable trestles over a floor that perceptibly quakes beneath the tread of the train. Every few miles we cross one of the great crescent lakes which are in fact the old horseshoe-shaped bends of the Mississippi, and have been abandoned by the ever-wandering stream; each one half a mile wide, its shore the green wall of the swamp tangle sweeping on either hand quite out of sight. In the still afternoon these lakes are as unruffled as the summer sky. There is an Indian tradition, that has found its way into few of our books, that all this region was a lake just before the coming of the white man, and that into this sheet of water the Mississippi and Ohio emptied by separate mouths. The lake was represented as having been half as large as Lake Erie, covering a large part of Missouri, Kentucky, and Southern Illinois. Some ground for a belief in the possibility of such a lake may be found in the structure of this country. Small rocky islands, such as are made only in open water, are said to be found at several points in the recesses of this swamp, and on their summits it is said there grows an assemblage of trees quite foreign to the swamp vegetation. Moreover, the early part of this century was marked by a convulsion of the most tremendous character, the frequent repetition of which would not be necessary to produce the most important changes in the

geography of the country. The earthquakes of 1811-13 seem to have revolutionized the structure of this district in many of its details; regions which were arable land became swamp, and others which were water-covered became dry land. So great were the disasters that the stricken people were granted new lands by the general government in place of the farms in the convulsed region whence they had been driven.

At sundown the train came again to the Mississippi, opposite Columbus, Kentucky. We were ferried over in a boat that takes the whole train at one passage, and landed below the singular, isolated highland which has made Columbus one of the keys to the navigation of the Mississippi. This is the first and highest of the Chickasaw bluffs, a curious series of lofty islands that stretch along the Mississippi, overlooking its waters from point to point all the way down to Natchez. They are the relics of the ancient delta of the river, made in the tertiary time, when a loftier continent was giving its waste to the river and to the sea. When the French voyagers came to this stream, these steep-walled hills were possessed by one of the tribes of the great Natchez group of Indians, who have left their abundant monuments over the hills. Along these ridges the mound-builder tribes survived to historical times, protected by their swamp moats and natural walls against the more barbarian races that fought their way down from the hungry and hard-limbed North. The great river, forming its ox-bow bends and then cutting them through at the isthmus, is always building fortresses which to savage warfare would be impregnable. The buffalo, which found its way into the eastern part of the Mississippi Valley with the ruder Indian tribes, who by their forest-burning habits opened a way to the unwieldy brutes, never came into this swamp belt. The savages here were preserved from that permanent debasement in which the herds of these animals—a source of easily obtained food and an incentive to a nomadic life—kept the more northern tribes. Here the swamp-entangled

land forbade migrations, while the fertile soil and rivers full of fish conducted to a life of fixed habits and steadfast improvement. No other region north of Mexico had attained to the advancement that had been secured in the centuries of agricultural life led by these tribes of the Mississippi border-lands before the coming of our race. There can be little doubt that they were well advanced in the line of development. Wealth of a communistic kind and something like a decent social order had been created.

The geographical value of these ridges has been even greater to the white man than to the Indian. The natural fortress of Columbus has already played a part in the fate of this country that few fortresses of Europe can claim in their lands. The efforts to gain possession of this key to the Mississippi led to the casting of the lot of Kentucky with the Western rather than with the Southern States. When that commonwealth was endeavoring to hold the impossible neutrality she had chosen to assume at the outset of the past civil contest, the Confederate commander in the neighboring department felt that this point must be secured, for it was to Mississippi what Ehrenbreitstein was to the Rhine. So he trespassed on the bounds of the would-be neutral State to possess himself of this stronghold. He failed to remove after a summons from the state authorities, and Kentucky was bound by the conditions of her declaration of neutrality to cast in her lot with the North. So this island of hill-land in the lowlands of the Mississippi became the means of determining the course of a State which more than any other held the key position in the great contest.

From Columbus southward to near the Tennessee line these Chickasaw bluffs are more or less conspicuous features in the topography, forming a succession of islands that rise above the marsh belt and afford admirable refuges from the fevers that breed in the lowlands to the southward. From the steep sides of these table-topped hills we look far over the sombre forests of the Mississippi

Valley, — forests that seem as unbroken as in their most primitive days. Cultivation breaks them somewhat as ships break the continuity of the sea. Now and then the river sunders the woods with its majestic sweeps. It too seems silent and solitary as the forest. One may watch it for hours without perceiving a trace of human occupancy. De Soto's men could not have seen a wilder river than now rolls through this scarce trodden wilderness. It is impossible to give in words an idea of the magnificence of these primeval forests, where the axe has as yet made hardly a scar. Moving within their caverned shade, or looking through the breaks made by the steep hill-sides over the sombre and boundless plain of their close-woven tops, one experiences a sense of immensity that is not given even by the sea. This forest is an infinity of stalwart struggling through silent life above and a deep, entangled death below. Perhaps in no other region in the world can the varied glories of a primeval wood so well be seen as here. All of North America is peculiarly rich in trees. Where Europe has oaks we have spruces; and many of the beautiful forest trees that once existed in the Old World, and are found there only among its fossil relics, still lift their heads to the sun in this less changed continent. We see here the forests of the North and South mingling their noblest forms. With the white oaks, the sycamores, the tulip-trees, and the other familiar growths that clothe the slopes of the Great Lakes and flourish here with a peculiar luxuriance, we get gigantic sweet-gums with their beautiful star-like leaves, Spanish oaks, the swamp cypress, and a host of other forms that belong beneath a warmer sun.

Although the distant views give the aspect of a forest mass quite unbroken by man, we find along this road frequent clearings and many fine farms. The forest wall shuts them in, but fertility seems to dwell in its shelter. The borders of the cypress and the cotton lie close together. So we find here the sometime king of trade; not at his best, but still very prosperous. Maize grows as if em-

ulous of the woods. Fruit trees abound, and are richly laden. The people seem thrifty and well conditioned along this upland belt; the children showing no trace of malaria in their bright faces. We seem, by the names and ways of the people, to have got out of the main Virginian tide of emigration to where, in the westward flowing of the streams, the Carolinian population gives the most of the peopling. It is, however, fortunately from Western North Carolina, and not from the shore region, that most of the Kentucky Carolinian blood comes; a sturdy, Scotch-mixed people, mountain bred in their American home, and full of strong qualities.

As we approach the Tennessee line, the hills fall away. Our road winds down their sides riven by deep, irregular gulches, which tradition says were made in the great earthquakes of 1811-13, when this region for hundreds of miles about was rocked as in the billows of a stormy sea. Some of these gulches are, however, pretty fresh, and seem to be due to great land-slides, where acres of timbered land creep slowly down to the valley. All this riverward fall of these bluffs seems inclined to such movements, so that the great rocking of the earthquakes may have only precipitated the sliding. Two hundred feet of descent brings us down to the base of the hills into a vast forest level,—an even denser wood than reigns above. A slow, perceptible descent leads us beyond the region of farms and into the overflow belt of the Mississippi River. We trace the descent by a simple sign: around the trunks of the trees there is a faint yellow band; at first it is near the ground, but it gradually rises until it is above our heads. This line marks the surface of the water during last winter's floods, the mud clinging there more tenaciously than would be expected. With the lowering level of the ground the shadow of the wood increases to the darkness of an eclipse, and the waters of the swamp creep through the earth; over them hang deep fringes of water-plants. Soon we are among the cypress-trees, the true swamp timber. With them comes a

wonderful change in the whole aspect of the forest. The undergrowth of bushes fades away, and in its place the comingled land and water is thick set with the knees that spring up from the partly buried roots of the trees. Around each great trunk, whose gnarled roots interlace the swamp for fifty feet about its base, rise half a hundred of these fantastic columns, looking like the strong pillars that beset a cavern floor. From a few inches to five or six feet in height, these curious processes rise all over the submerged roots of the cypress; they often carry on their tops a fantastic turban-like knot recalling the turbaned columns of a Moslem cemetery. Their function is unknown, but it is clear that they are in some way connected with the submergence of the roots of the cypress; for when the tree grows with its roots in earth above the water level, they are not formed at all, and their abundance is proportioned to the amount of submergence of the roots. When by any accident the knees are sunk quite beneath the waters, the cypress is said to die, and all my observations bear out the assertion.

Within a mile of the base of the bluffs we are in the caverned shade of the soundless cypress forest, where the road creeps along in the medley of land and water. At length we are arrested by a broad lagoon, where the road ends and a foot-path winds on through the morass. The lagoon looked much like a green road with occasional pools of black water, so dense was the mat of vegetation borne upon its surface. Over it was a tangle of half-buried trees, and their wreck strewed it so thickly that a boat could make no path through it. Every log was dotted over with bright-backed turtles, in their endless search for sunshine. It was warm enough to heat even their cold blood to a sparkling point, for it was a Northern July sun. A few hundred feet of wrestle with the outlying swamp brought us to a natural foot-bridge, where a noble water-logged tree made a floating way over the lagoon.

A few steps beyond lay Reelfoot Lake, the great work of the earthquake of

1811. Nothing could well exceed the singularity of the view that meets the eye as one comes out of the shadows of the forest on to the border of this sheet of water. From the marshy shore spreads out the vast extent of the seemingly level carpet of vegetation, a mat of plants studded over with a host of beautiful flowers; through this green prairie runs a maze of water-ways, some just wide enough for a pirogue, some widening into pools of darkened water. All over this expanse rise the trunks of gigantic cypresses, shorn of all their limbs, and left like great obelisks, scattered so thickly that the distance is lost in the forest of spires. Some are whitened and some blackened by decay and fire; many rise to a hundred feet or more above the lake. The branches are all gone save in a few more gigantic forms, whose fantastic remnants of the old forest arches add to the illusion of monumental ruin which forces itself on the mind. The singularity of the general effect is quite matched by the wonder of the detail. Taking the solitary dug-out canoe, or pirogue, as it is called in the vernacular, we paddled out into the tangle of water-paths. The green carpet studded with yellow and white that we saw from the shores resolved itself into a marvelously beautiful and varied vegetation. From the tangle of curious forms the eye selects two noble flowers: our familiar Northern water-lily, grown to a royal form, its flowers ten inches broad and its floating pads near a foot across; and another grander flower, the Wampapin lily, the queen of American flowers. It is worth a long journey to see this shy denizen of our swamps in its full beauty. From the midst of its great floating leaves, which are two feet or more in diameter, rise two large leaves borne upon stout footstalks that bring them a yard above the water; from between these elevated leaves rises to a still greater height the stem of the flower. The corolla itself is a gold-colored cup a foot in diameter, lily-like in a general way, but with a large, pestle-shaped ovary rising in the centre of the flower, in which are planted a number of large seeds, the "pins" of

the name. These huge golden cups are poised on their stems, and wave in the breeze above great, wheel-like leaves, while the innumerable white lilies fill in the spaces between, and enrich the air with their perfume.

Slowly we crept through the tangled paths until we were beyond the sight of shore, in the perfect silence of this vast ruined temple, on every side the endless obelisks of the decaying cypress; and as far as eye could see were ranged the numberless nodding bells of the yellow lilies and the still-eyed white stars below them. While we waited in the coming evening the silence was so deep that the whirl of a bald eagle's wings, as he swept through the air, was audible from afar. The lonely creature sat on the peak of one of the wooden towers over our boat, and looked curiously down upon us. The waters seem full of fish, and indeed the lake has much celebrity as a place for such game. We could see them creeping through the mazes of the water-forest, in a slow, blind way, not a bit like the dance of the Northern creatures of the active waters of our mountain streams.

There is something of forgetfulness in such a scene, a sense of a world far away with no path back to it. One might fall to eating our Wampapin lily, as did the Chickasaws of old, and find in it the all-forgetting lotus, for it is indeed the brother of the lotus of the Nile. We do not know how far these forgotten savages found the mystic influence of the Nilotic lotus in these queenly flowers of the swamps, but tradition says that they ate not only the seeds but the bulbous roots, which the natives aver are quite edible. So we, too, can claim a lotus-eating race, and are even able to try the soul-subduing powers of the plant at our will.

There is something in the weight of life and death in these swamps that subdues the mind and makes the steps we take fall as in a dream. It was not easy to fix a basis for memory with the pencil, and the recollection shapes a vast sensation of strangeness, a feeling as if one had trod for a moment beyond the

brink of time, rather than any distinct images.

The origin of this lake is no less strange than its physical features. At the beginning of the century it was probably an ordinary swamp covered by a forest of gigantic cypresses. In the month of November, 1811, a succession of great earthquakes convulsed this country; the levels were so upset that the current of the Mississippi was reversed, the hills were rent with great fissures, and the forest trees swept against each other till their boughs were entangled like the horns of fighting stags. When the shock was over, this swamp was found to have sunk from six to ten feet, over an area of at least thirty square miles. It may be that fifty square miles were involved in the subsidence. The incessant convulsions of the following months, though just enough to wreck the strong-built, primitive cabins, and to keep a brave people in constant terror, did not further affect the conditions of the new-made lake. The submerged forest trees slowly decayed. The hunters' fires began to spread from the shores, and, wafted from tree to tree, so charred the tall trunks that they became preserved against further decay, and promised to remain as enduring as though made of stone. Fire and water are preservers as well as destroyers; the burned roots and crowns are safe from the access of decay by their submergence, and the fire-blackened surface of the trunks shuts out the action of the air and rain.

The tradition exists that during these great and singularly continuous earthquakes there were many other sudden changes of level in this region, and we might infer that a large part of the swamp region hereabouts was called suddenly into existence by these convulsions. There are also in the old sagas reports of a greater change in the remote part of this region than those brought about by the great New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-13.

Our way out from the lake was through the vast forests that cover the overflow belt of the Mississippi, — a boundless, silent wood, where occasional breaks of

culture only made the shadow seem the deeper. A soil of marvelous richness holds the bread of future generations within its depths. Thousands of acres of land, such as along the banks of the Po or the Nile have given up their fatness through long centuries to man, await his demands beneath these guarding woods, with a beautiful climate and a river that makes a way to a whole world. These lands have still to find their possessors. A very simple and inexpensive system of dykes would bar out the freshets and keep the water level at a fixed point, and so remove the two barriers to cultivation, the floods and fevers that infect the region.

The next step in the subjugation of this country will doubtless lead to the reclamation of the most fertile of its lands, the border belt of the Mississippi. In the domination of that river there is a future for the exercise of the best engineering talent, and for the development of a second Holland out of the thrift that comes from an endless battle with the waters. So far nearly every step in the work has been a blunder. There is little knowledge of the means necessary to control a great river in its endless wanderings. As we go along the banks of the Mississippi we can see evidence of its incessant changes of course: here it is cutting out the foundations of a town; there a great stretch of corn fields is going down before our eyes; while on the other side a tangle of cotton-woods and willows marks where the forest is advancing into the stream. To give the basis for culture in the certainty of possession it will be necessary for man to institute a government for this vagarious and riotous river, lest it eat up a large part of our heritage. We could easily find in the necessity of this government reason enough for the solidarity of the valley of the Mississippi. On the other hand, it is clear that the central control owes it to this region to master the enormous forces that are assembled in the river, and make them work the least possible destruction in their course.

Even the great tide of this wonderful

river in its majestic movement fails to efface the memory of the strange lagoons behind us. The contrast between the two scenes is, in its way, no less striking than that which is given between a cav-

ern and the broad day. Nothing that the hills have to give can exceed in intensity the impressions that one carries away from that strangely created, forest-guarded lake.

N. S. Shaler.

FESSENDEN'S GARDEN.

FROM this high window, in the twilight dim,
I look beyond a lofty garden wall,
And see well-ordered walks and borders trim,
With trellised vines and ranks of fruit trees tall.

Along the darkling shrubbery, where most
The garden's olden lord at evening strayed,
I half perceive a silent, stately ghost
Taking dim shape against the denser shade.

His footstep makes no rustle in the grass,
Nor shakes the tenderest blossom on its stem;
The light leaves bend aside to let him pass, —
Or is it but the wind that touches them?

A statesman, with a grave, reflective air,
Once used to walk there, in the shadows sweet;
Now the broad apple-trees, his pride and care,
Spread their pink carpet wide for alien feet.

Beneath those friendly boughs, with mind unbent,
He found sometimes a respite sweet and brief;
Threaded the wandering ways in pleased content,
And plucked a flower, or pulled a fragrant leaf;

Twined a stray tendril, lopped a straggling limb,
Or raised a spray that drooped across the walk;
Watched unscared birds that shared the shade with him,
Saw robins build, or heard the sparrows talk.

His native streets now hardly know his name;
And in the world of politics, wherein
He toiled so long and earned an honored fame,
It is almost as though he had not been.

Amid the earnest councils of the land,
His lofty form, his cold and clear-cut face,

His even voice, and wise restraining hand
Are known no more, and others take his place.

But in this haunt of quietude and rest,
Which for so many years he loved and knew,
The bird comes back to build its annual nest,
The months return, with sun and snow and dew.

Nature lives on, though king or statesman dies;
Thus mockingly these little lives of ours,
So brief, so transient, seem to emphasize
The immortality of birds and flowers!

Elizabeth Akers Allen.

JOHN BULL.

As I was taking luncheon at a London club, and trying to fix my attention upon a soup for which its kitchen has a singular reputation, I was conscious that a gentleman who was passing my table paused; a hand was lightly laid upon my shoulder, and I heard the salutation, "How are you?" with that up and down and up again inflection of the voice upon the three words which makes the greeting so cheery from English lips. I turned my full face to the speaker, and for a moment we looked straight into each other's eyes; then he stepped back saying, "I—I beg pardon; I was mistaken." In that moment of mutual scrutiny, although I had never seen him before, I had recognized the fine, sagacious face of Sergeant —, one of the leaders of the British bar, — rightly, as a casual introduction soon showed; but in his face there was only blankness, astonishment, and confusion. The incident impressed itself upon me not only or chiefly because a like mistake in regard to me had been made twice before in England, but because Sergeant —'s face was familiar to me from a good photograph I had had for several years at home, and because in considering it I had been struck with its conformity in feature and expression to a not uncom-

mon New England type. And yet a more thoroughly English face could not be found between John o' Groat's and Land's-End. It was not round or rosy, neither was it at all bluff. It was rather long or longish; the cheeks were not full and had little color, but that was healthy; the nose was aquiline; the mouth not small, but well shaped, with mobile lips; the chin firm; the forehead high, and rather narrow than broad. In brief, it was a face as unlike that of "John Bull" as a human face could well be; and yet, as I have already said, one more thoroughly English could not well be found. And here was a typical Englishman taking an unmitigated Yankee, not one of whose forefathers had been in England for two hundred and forty and odd years, for another Englishman, his familiar friend, and the latter recognizing the typical Englishman's face as one known to him for its New England form and favor. As types will survive long under strange and adverse skies, and even after disappearing for some two or three generations will break forth again, this was not at all out of the natural course of things. The significant fact in the incident was that this New England face on a London barrister's shoulders was the typical face

that has ruled in England for centuries, and yet that it is absolutely unlike the face which (who can tell why or how?) has been thrust upon the world, nay, accepted by Englishmen, as the characteristic English face, the face of John Bull. Now it is with careful consideration and after examination of the subject that I say that the rarest man in the England of to-day is John Bull, and that in the England of the past he was almost unknown. We all know him well. He began to appear in caricature about a hundred years ago; a huge, broad-backed, big-bellied, uncouth, stolid, beef-witted animal, as incapable of thought or daring, not to say of poetry, philosophy, statesmanship, or chivalry, as a fatted calf. Nevertheless such has been the creature set up as the type of the people which has produced Sidney and Spenser and Shakespeare and Bacon and Newton and Nelson and Napier, — men who were only the first among a throng of others of their kind. Not forgetting the homely traits which are apt to be selected in the humorous delineation of a figure which is to represent a people, and making all allowance for this trick of art, it is yet undeniable that John Bull is soberly regarded by half the world, himself included, as the type of the people which has assumed his name. There was never a more absurd misrepresentation, except indeed in the accepted typical Yankees of the British stage, which our own caricaturists — if we have any who may be rightly called our own — have in like manner adopted, thereby giving a semblance of authority to a ridiculous libel, and perpetuating it. John Bull may of course be found in England, but his appearance there, like that here of him who is strangely called the typical American, always occasions remark, and of a somewhat disparaging and jocose character. I have observed that if one Englishman speaks of another as "a real John Bull," it is generally with a smile, and that the real John is sure to be in a somewhat lower social position than the speaker. Whence comes this coarse, obtrusive figure, elbowing his way before his betters, to thrust himself forward as the most

English of Englishmen? He has no place in England's history, even in the history of the English people. His face and figure do not appear in the throng of those who, for one quality or another which made them men of mark, or in many cases, perhaps in most, for their mere possession of English land, have been handed down to us on canvas. John Bull's face does not look upon posterity from England's long gallery of portraits until within the last century; and even in that period he appears but rarely. Turn over the copious collections of engraved portraits of Englishmen from the times of the Wars of the Roses, in the throes of which modern England had its birth; wander through the oak-carved rooms and raftered halls from which ancestral Englishmen gaze down in still amazement upon their successors, not always their descendants, and you will see that John Bull, unlike Napoleon, was not an ancestor. Nor does the type of which he may be accepted as the caricature appear; except, indeed, with such rarity of occurrence and vagueness of conformity as might be found in the pictured memorials of any people. John Bull as we hear him described and see him represented now is a production of the coarse caricaturists with pen and pencil of the last century, and he has been thoughtlessly adopted by their successors and the public for which they have worked; the adoption being favored by the fact that it occurred at a period when England was reaching the pinnacle of her military, naval, and commercial eminence, and when her middle classes were rising to political importance.

This I know: that in no English home into which I was admitted, whether a peasant's cottage or a great house, did I find John Bull, either as host or guest. I met him neither at Oxford nor at Cambridge, among the Fellows or the undergraduates, nor at the Inns of Court among the other barristers. He never brought me my chop in London, or waited on me at a country house. I did see him, however, from time to time, but very rarely. I met him on the top of an

omnibus, in a grill-room, as one of the magnates of a knot of suburban villas, in the coffee-room of a provincial inn, and once in the pit of a theatre, where he was accompanied by the dreadful female of his own species, for whom he went out and brought in food, as became an animal *ferus nature*; and very odd he and she looked there in full evening dress. As to his make and his manner, who needs to be told them? He is ungainly, with too much solid fat for ease of movement; grace is beyond his apprehension; he does not know what it is. He is red of face, and often of whisker; and his big mouth is oftener open than shut, even when he is not engaged in the serious occupation of putting something into it, or in the rarer employment of speaking. His reason is an oath or a bet; his wit, a practical joke; his merriment, a horse-laugh; his most powerful argument, a clenched fist. In John Bull there seems to be embodied a certain element of brutality which has, by time and circumstance, or change of clime, been bred out of the English blood in this country. It is that element of character which makes some Englishmen not only use force brutally, but even submit to it when it is so used with effect. John Bull will thrash you if he can, and make you do his dirty work; but if you can thrash him, he will submit and do yours, shake hands, and bear no malice. He fights to try who is the best man; and the best man, not right, is to rule. It is this element of character which is the stable foundation of fagging at the public schools. The small boys and the new boys must submit to the big boys and the old boys, and fag for them, simply because those are small and new, and these are big and old. That is the order of nature, — John Bull nature. This nature supports the cruel floggings and “tundings” which make the blood of other folk to boil within them. The female Bull is not exempt from it. Flogging seems to be the most dearly cherished privilege among parents, even mothers, of the John Bull class. Some years ago, when there was a feeble protest made in the London pa-

pers against flogging girls, sundry British matrons, glowing with virtuous indignation, rushed into print and to the rescue, and told with unction how they had stripped and flogged their daughters, marriageable girls, and with what good effect; for, marvelous to tell, the girls submitted! And an English lady whom I know well told another whom I know better how her uncle, a peer, came one morning into her bedroom, as he was going to ride to hounds, and making her get up flogged her with his hunting-whip as she stood in her nightgown; and this because she would let her cousin, his son, make love to her, to the prospective peril of some family arrangements. She was an orphan and brotherless; and therefore let us hope and be willing to believe it was that coroneted Bull had not his nose brought to the ring. As to the cruel and indiscriminate flogging in public schools, Fielding’s wise head and kind heart protested against it more than a century ago. “Discipline, indeed!” says Parson Adams. “Because one man scourges twenty or thirty boys more in a morning than another, is he therefore a better disciplinarian?” True, scourging is a very ancient and much-honored form of educational discipline; for have we not Solomon’s protest against innovation in this respect? Parson Adams himself scourged boys who could not say the catechism. It is the acceptance of it by the scourged as well as by the scourgers, and the willingness of fathers that their boys should be beaten by any one who is able to do it, from master and usher down to the school bully and the town bully, which is particularly John Bullish. The father would be delighted if his boy could and should thrash the bully; but the right of the bully to thrash if he can, and to have his own way because he is the best man, he rarely ventures to dispute. The right of might and the laws which might establishes are not to be denied. A fainting, frightened hare is torn to pieces by the hounds before the face of Fanny and that paragon of men, her lover, Joseph Andrews; but she, Fielding tells us, “was unable to as-

sist it with any aid more powerful than pity, nor could she prevail on Joseph, who had been himself a sportsman in his youth, to attempt anything contrary to the laws of hunting in favor of the hare, which he said *was killed fairly*." The laws of the hunting-field are too much those of English society. It was perfectly in keeping with this spirit that recently an anti-vivisection meeting was broken up by two or three hundred medical students, and such like, who marched into the lecture-room of Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, yelling, blowing trumpets, ringing bells, breaking the chairs and the chandeliers, and at last fighting with the police. They were presumably educated men, students of science; but because the call for the meeting spoke of vivisection as cruel and demoralizing, they broke it up by brute force, and gave a high finish to their proceedings by lighting their pipes and cigars and puffing the smoke into the faces of the ladies who were present. John Bull was there in large force on that occasion.

On the other hand, the same sort of Englishman bears himself with a deference to rank and wealth which is unknown not only here, but on the continent of Europe, except perhaps in Germany. John Bull, it has been said, "loves a lord;" but to be loved the lord must have lordly belongings and surroundings. The respect is for gross material advantage, of which the title is the consequence. A peer may become poor, but poor men are not raised to the peerage. The rich lord rules not only the land but the heart of England. At this very day and under the last reform, which distributes the suffrage so widely, even the liberal London Spectator tells us that "the constituencies decline to send up young men unless they are eldest sons."¹ As to wealth, the diffusion of knowledge and the political elevation by which that has been followed seem to have increased rather than diminished the numbers of its slavish worshipers. True, the worship is merely a manifestation of selfishness; but in England it takes on the form of

a religion, and seeks to invest itself with a sort of social mystery. The Saturday Review, apropos of the loathsome Bagot will case, says that one point brought out by it is "the slavish adulation accorded nowadays to mere wealth." "If," the reviewer continues, "a man attains to the dignity of a 'nugget' his roughness is pardoned, or lauded as an absence of affectation; his vulgarity treated as naturalness or eccentricity; and his vices slurred over, or attributed to defective education." But this is nothing new in England; it is no peculiar mark of nowadays. In the very book and in the very chapter from which I have just brought Fielding to witness, he makes Joseph ask, "What inspires a man to build fine houses, to purchase fine furniture, pictures, clothes, and other things, but an ambition to be respected more than other people?" Nor indeed is this particular kind of respect peculiar to the English or to any other people, or to any period. The Apostle James, in rebuking the early Christians for showing respect to a man who came among them with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and disrespect to the poor man in vile raiment, merely touched a spot of moral weakness which seems to have appeared at the earliest stage of man's development, — possibly before, for is there not a snobbishness in dogs? And yet the dog may have caught this from his human companion. The wolf, who we are told is his ancestor, is pure from it. The only peculiarity of English society in respect to this feeling is a sort of declarative pompous deification of material wealth, without any of that attempted graceful mitigation of the grossness of the adulation which appears more or less among almost all other peoples.

But in England wealth has, more than in most other countries, its own duties and responsibilities. There a man of wealth, especially of hereditary wealth, cannot hold up his head among men unless he makes some use of his money which will benefit others, — at least "the county" and "the parish." He may do it in a reasonable and benevolent

¹ May 9, 1878.

way, or he may keep hounds, or if not subscribe to the hunt; but something he must do, or be set down as a shabby fellow. To pass over the more serious responsibilities of this kind, he is expected to give with his own hand, if he is anything less than a duke. In England *noblesse oblige* means that he who has pounds must give shillings. *Largeesse* has dwindled into the less mouth-filling *tip*; but the duty remains. I sought in vain to define the line between the man who did expect a shilling and him who did not. It was easy enough to find those who did not; but to discover exactly where the expectation began was very difficult. And a repetition of the silver sweetener, corresponding to the barrister's "refresher," is expected to be more frequent than I was prepared to find it. There is a butler in Lancashire who, after much not un-rewarded attentiveness, parted from me with a cold, reproachful stare of ducal dignity, which when I had got a little distance from the house I felt sure was because of some neglect of what was becoming on my part. I was almost tempted to turn back and beg his forgiveness with the acceptance of a crown, or even a half sovereign. In my lonely moments and waking hours that man's lofty look of disappointment troubles my memory. In truth, I believe that he was more disappointed in me than in the loss of a "vail." He had thought better of me. As to the two classes, of expectants and non-expectants, it would perhaps be safe to assume that tips are not looked for by peers and personal friends; but — safest rule of all — when in doubt give the shilling.

Perhaps one element of John Bullism is that self-assertion, personal and national, which is certainly a very marked trait of English character. It is not new. Sir William Temple says somewhere that no people so abounds in originals as the English. Doubtless time and the drift of modern society have somewhat done away with this tendency to eccentric exuberance in England; but it still exists there to a degree which makes Sir William Temple's remarks

hold good. They have "characters" in England. Everywhere they may be found; but they naturally come to the surface more in small communities, — provincial towns and villages. In these, characters — men who dare to be peculiar, eccentric — are known to almost all the townsfolk, and are allowed to have their way, if their way is harmless, even if they are poor; if they are rich, whether or no. We have not these characters. There used to be some in the New England villages, but they have mostly if not entirely disappeared, and we are all now ground down into an average.

It is this element of self-assertion that makes John Bull a grumbler even when he is good-natured at bottom. He does not shrink from letting you know just what he wants, and that what he wants he expects, particularly if you have taken his money. This is so general a habit and so well established a privilege that those who do give anything for money look for some grumbling, not only as a matter of course but as a guide. I had been little more than a week at my lodgings in London, where my breakfast was served to me by the lodging-house keeper, at her discretion, when the maid said one morning, as she went out with the tray, "I'm afraid we shan't satisfy you, sir, with your breakfast." I told her that the breakfasts were very good; that tea and eggs and bacon and fish and muffins and marmalade were a breakfast good enough for any man, and quite all I wished to pay for. "Yes, sir," she replied, "but you never grumble about anything you have, and so we don't know how to please you." Could this trait of character have had better illustration than in such a disappointed groping for it as a guide by this good girl, who seemed to study my slightest wishes, and who generally did anticipate them?

Characteristically English conduct was that of a very eminent man of letters, of whose performance I heard. He had gone to visit at a house whose hospitality was offered to him by two old maiden ladies, who were co-heiresses of a small

estate, and were of the rank of gentry, but did not keep a very large domestic establishment. They had been brought up when the fashion of "tubbing" every morning was not so common as it is now. What was the horror of the household—wholly female—at the appearance of Mr. — at the head of the staircase in the morning, more thinly and lightly clad than became a middle-aged bachelor among spinsters, and bawling out, "I should like to know how I'm to take my bawth with this little can of water!"

This individual self-assertion takes form in customs peculiar to families, which are adopted very easily and retained firmly; in some cases they have been kept up for generations. In one country house at which I visited it was the custom to breakfast in the library, dinner being of course in the dining-room. On Sunday morning I went as usual to the library at breakfast time, but although I was a little late there were no signs of breakfast. I took up a book and began to read. Erelong a servant appeared and asked me into the dining-room to breakfast; and there my host informed me, with apology, that on Sunday the custom of the house was reversed,—breakfast was in the dining-room and dinner in the library. At a time of some domestic confusion in days past this had happened to be convenient; it was continued for some unknown reason for a while, and had then hardened into a family custom which became a part of the religious observance of Sunday. The free and independent American citizen does not do so. He is not free and independent enough to dare to be eccentric, and to be so, as in this case, it would seem, chiefly for the purpose of having some custom peculiar to himself and to his household. But it was not unpleasing.

Coexistent, however, with this strong individuality and the license accorded to it is a disposition to resent any attempt to introduce social changes, particularly if the attempt seems to imply any reproach. The sensitiveness on this point is very great,—so great that it becomes

touchiness. *Nolumus leges antiquas Angliæ mutare* expresses the spirit of the rulers of society now as well as it did that of the rulers of the state centuries ago. It is not the general custom to use napkins at luncheon in England, although at great houses luncheon is in reality a small dinner; as it may well be when "ta muckle dinner hersel" is at eight o'clock, and on great occasions at nine. An American lady was visiting at one of these houses, where she found the usual absence of the napkin at midday. She knew her hostess so well that she could venture to ask her why it was that napkins were not used at luncheon. Her grace (for she was a duchess) replied simply and briefly that it was "not the custom," and with an air that signified that that settled the question. But her guest had taken luncheon with the queen more than once at Balmoral, and there she had found napkins. This she told her friend as a sort of justification of her inquiry. "Indeed!" replied the duchess. "The queen had better be careful. She will make herself unpopular if she undertakes to change the customs of the country." The Philistinism of John Bull does not even stop short of napkins.

This is one manifestation of the feeling which takes another form in the dislike of anything foreign, and in the assumption that nothing out of England can be quite so right as it is in England,—nothing moral, mental, or physical. This is a genuine feeling, and not an affectation, or the result of arrogance, as it is generally assumed to be. It is often manifested with a simplicity which is at once laughable and charming. In the Tichborne trial, the last one, which condemned the impostor to penal servitude, Major Foster, of Roger Tichborne's regiment, said, in giving his testimony, that "Roger was very much of a Frenchman, but a perfect gentleman." Nothing more natural or unconscious ever was spoken; and the speaker would probably be very unwilling to insult a Frenchman, or to wound his feelings. And so the candid London Spectator said of the hero of a book that "he lived in a

perfect bower of Dresden china, wore blue satin clothes, and told falsehoods with all a *foreigner's facility*."¹ And yet if there is or ever was a journal in the world that means to be just to all men, and that usually is generous, it is the Spectator.

It would seem that "a foreigner" is and always has been the subject of doubt and wonder and laughter in England. "But Lord!" writes Pepys, when the Russian ambassador comes to London, "to see the absurd nature of Englishmen, that cannot forbear laughing and jeering at everything that looks strange!"

But notwithstanding the protest that naturally rises at this British assumption, and the arrogance that springs from and accompanies it, the simple truth is that it is not without reason. Of all gentlemen, an English gentleman is the most complete and admirable. His probity is the most absolute, so firm and well settled that it needs not to assert itself; his courtesy is the most genuine, for it unites with a manner which is so simple as not to be a manner a thoughtfulness for others and a hearty benevolence that stops at hardly any self-sacrifice; he is a dignified embodiment of manliness and truth. His weak point is apt to be in tact; a deficiency which results from a radical lack of sensibility, and from a hardy superiority to the little things of life. But in fine specimens of the class this is supplied by breeding; and the result is a type than which nothing could be more "express and admirable." It seems as if the hard and tough material of his nature, when it is rubbed down, is capable of the highest polish.

It is somewhat strange to see a people so marked by national egoism, so arrogant and self-asserting, so bound up in a sense of the excellence of their race and of their own institutions, that their insolence is a mere result of the consequent moral insulation, ready to adopt and even to claim the product of other lands and other races as their own. Let any man live in England and take up English ways and prejudices, and he

will soon be reckoned among Englishmen. The more surely will this be if he has any special gift in the arts. It is not only strange but a little amusing to hear Englishmen reckoning Händel as an English composer, and Alma Tadema as an English painter, because of their English domicile. For not only were they born and bred in other countries and of other races, but the cast of their minds and the nature of their productions is thoroughly un-English. And this same self-centred, self-asserting people is ruled nominally by a family of Germans, whose habits and tone of thought, and, even after generations of life in England, whose daily household speech are German; and ruled really — this downright people — by a crafty Hebrew whom their German queen has made into a grotesque semblance of an English earl.

One result of the egoism and self-assertion which pervades all classes of Englishmen is admirable and much to be desired. This is the maintenance of personal rights of whatever kind. It is absolute, beyond all reach of wealth, or power, or rank; practically even beyond, it would seem, the vaunted omnipotence of an act of Parliament. This absoluteness is a genuine outcome of the English character. It exists nowhere else. Liberty, fraternity, and equality will not secure it; rather the contrary. I would define England as the land where every man has rights which every other man must respect, — can disregard only at his peril. He may incur the danger of disregarding them if he chooses to do so; but in that case the chances are ninety-nine in the hundred that whatever his rank or his influence he will suffer for it, even if he accomplish his purpose, and even that he will not do without a fight. The rights are not the same rights, and those who would rather have identity of rights with the constant risk of having them disregarded with impunity by "the public," or by rich corporations, or even by an assuming individual who takes on — perhaps physically as well as financially — the form of a corporation, will probably prefer some other country.

Richard Grant White.

¹ November 27, 1862.

NEW ENGLAND WOMEN.

I HEAR a great deal of talk at dinner parties; sometimes I think it a pity that it should be lost. I was struck lately with the quaint originality of my friend Harrison, who sat opposite to a cloudy but cultivated Englishman. The conversation had been more fragmentary and jerky than it is usually, even; we had jumped from the dollar of our fathers — a subject we ladies found dull, particularly as we have lately been able to charm so few of them from our immediate masculine neighbors — up to "How *very* brilliant Mars has been this summer, almost realizing the old idea, you know, of a battle summer," and so on, rising in our celestial scenery till at last, referring to that exquisite Crescent and the Cross effect which Venus and Luna were obliging enough to produce for us a short time since, we suddenly descended; and I feared that we were drifting toward the Gulf Stream, whose soft, enervating influence wooses but to drown all rational conversation, when somebody (bless him!) spoke up about Western exports (even pigs, I fear), and we were saved!

It brought out Harrison, a profuse and fluent talker, and waked up Mr. Majoribanks, the most literal and hemmy and hawey Englishman I have lately met, who uttered a singularly curt sentence for him.

"What do you export from New England?" said he. It was a clarion call!

"Women!" said Harrison, bravely. "Unique women, with a peculiar flavor, local, like that of California wine."

"You mean that — you mean that — haw — that you — hem — I don't know — you mean that — that you — hem — send these women away?" remarked Majoribanks, looking shocked.

"We do not put them in bottles and sell them by the dozen! No, we allow our customers to come and select individual samples, while we warrant them to be tonic in character, sound, of admi-

rable bouquet, a genuine article, the pure juice of the grape," said Harrison, with the fluency of an American and with the liquid speech of a wine merchant.

"They should be — I suppose — they should be — they should be — hem — I suppose — born in Boston, should they not?"

"Yes," said Harrison rapidly, "that is, imperial Johannisberger, but the supply is necessarily limited; we cannot fill our orders for that, so we furnish a fine Ausleser, the first dropping of the grape, from our vineyards which grow on the bleak hill-sides of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Cold winters and short summers, a great deal of cultivation, Puritan style of clipping the tendrils, not much richness of soil, not much richness any way, and we bring to perfection the rarest, purest, most peculiar grape in all the world!"

The Englishman smiled. "I have found the flavor excellent — hem — ah! — excellent, you know, but perhaps — I don't know — a trifle too pronounced. You spoke — perhaps — yes — hem — haw — of California wines. A little cold, a trifle forbidding, perhaps too intellectual, not so charming as — I don't know — hem — perhaps the women of New York, or — haw — farther South and West. Cincinnati now — charming women there, you know."

Harrison burst forth like one of his own similes, imperfectly corked California champagne, not too ripe.

"She has not studied charm, my export, that I grant you; she will not flatter you, but the purest, most honest creature! true to her prejudices all the world over, like everybody who is worth anything. Take her to Paris to live at eighteen, and at fifty (the dear thing) you will find her with her New England opinions thick upon her. She call on anybody in Paris that she would not call on in Springfield? Perish the thought!

Puritan morality, Puritan prejudice, Puritan purity, I find in her a sort of passion for chastity, a clearness of intent, a determination not to please any man but her husband."

"I thought," said Majoribanks, delicately dipping his walnut in wine, and slowly crunching it with his fine white teeth, "I thought I had—I don't know—I thought I had seen New England women in Paris."

"Yes," said the American hastily, "false growths, parasites which float up from tropical swamps, we know not how; the seed of a South American air plant may reach even Norway; the oidium will visit our grape-vines sometimes. But I speak of typical women, the best product, the highly organized sisterhood. I assure you that these women are as different from Southern women as is an Irish potato from a sweet potato."

"The Southern women are delicious," said Mr. Majoribanks, deliberately eating a pecan nut. Our host, a literary man, and a purist, said that the word "delicious" must not be used except in regard to food, odors, and music.

Our hostess had asked us (ladies) not to leave the table when the gentlemen began to smoke, but to stay (if we did not mind cigars) and listen to the conversation. As we all told her that we frequently had to stand the smoke without the conversation, we agreed to remain, and one brave woman said, "I consider cigar smoke *delicious*."

"'Delicious' should be used only in regard to what goes over the palate," said Harrison, "but as I was impertinent enough to use a potato simile, we will forgive Majoribanks."

"Speech goes over the palate, therefore speech can be delicious," said our hostess.

"Southern women, I am pleased to say," said Harrison, "are very nice; I like the flattering things that they say to one in a drawing manner. I like their low-toned, rich voices; courteous even to their own sex, and to our unworthy sex, even to the old and the unornamental, they are most attentive. I remember arriving one summer's day at

a watering-place hotel, ill, jaded, travel-stained. I entered the crowded dining-room filled with well-dressed fashionable habitués. One Southwestern woman, a great belle, sat at her own table surrounded by her beaux, and gallantly caparisoned in a Worth dress. I knew her a little, a very little; she might have come and bowed to me on the piazza, later, but what *did* she do? She got up, walked the whole length of that dining-room, came to my table, ordered my dinner for me, comforted me, smiled upon me; and made me a well man. Now there was no glory to be derived from me; I own up to sixty-five; I am not an office holder, or a millionaire. She did this cordial thing because she is a cordial creature, full of amiability, love of approbation, if you please, but certainly very charming. There were a dozen New England women in the room who knew me much better than she did; not one of them thought of this fascinating manifestation of courtesy. She forgot all about me, I dare say, the next day, but I shall not forget her face."

"It was a conspicuous thing to do," said our hostess, who is a shy New England woman. Harrison looked at her with respect, but went on: "Too much prudence, a decided egotism, are the accompaniments of higher virtues. I will allow that my typical woman has the defects of her qualities!"

"I have thought—haw—I have—I don't know—I have perhaps supposed—hem—that the New England people, women, you know—haw—were too much occupied in being good—being—perhaps—intellectual," said Majoribanks, tilting the ashes of his cigar into a receiver.

Harrison swallowed a thimbleful of curaçoa; he was growing softer and more sentimental; he quoted the lines,—

"I slept and dreamed that life was beauty,
I woke and found that life was duty."

"That is their watchword," said he; "from youth to age what heroines they are! how they can consume their own smoke!" Here he lighted a fresh Rosa Concha, whose etherealization nearly hid him from us. "How she can suffer and

be strong! That clever woman, Mrs. Henry Field, that Frenchwoman with the great brain and heart, now dead, said to me once that she had been watching all day a New England heroine.

"I have seen her sit by her son through a most cruel operation," said she. "Of course it wounded her laterally and diagonally more than it did him; what is worse, it will reverberate through her nerves forever, while he will recover and forget it. She showed nothing but a tender firmness. I have left her sewing up-stairs as if nothing had happened. There is a color high upon either cheek, nature's only sign of victory over that indomitable unselfishness!"

"And yet," said I, "a sister of charity does this every day."

"Ah," said my observant Frenchwoman, "the sister is not a mother, to begin with. She has her church, her vows, and her dress to help her. What a shield is a uniform! These are all enormous aids. The New England Joan of Arc fights without armor."

"Her armor is her honest thought," said I.

"Yes," said Mrs. Field, "she leans on her own unassisted soul, as no other woman ever did."

"And the woman who spoke there lived and died a heroine."

Majoribanks had begun several times a sentence which he did not seem able to find. He fumbled for his language. Why do the Englishmen mislay their words so perpetually? They have ideas, they have education. What demon has stolen their fluency?

"Do they ever—is there sometimes—is it impossible for them to—do you know—in fact, do they know how to flirt—to be coquettish?" said he, with difficulty; a sort of stertorous breathing out of idea, broken by "you knows."

"No," said Harrison. "Never were such single-minded Eves! The serpent has not hissed in their ears. In their relation towards men, unique; to love some one man, live for him, die for him, it is enough. Flirtation would give them a sick headache; coquetry, under a waterproof cloak, never!"

"Cold, bloodless beauties—I suppose, because, you know—because, you know—I think—I don't know—yes, I do know they are very pretty, you know," said Majoribanks with unaccustomed fervor.

"Not at all, not at all; not bloodless beauties!" said the irrepressible Harrison. "Just as beautiful as Italians, Spaniards, South of France, Arles—all that sort of thing. Why, I have in my mind now a valley in New England where the dark-haired, red-lipped, high-shouldered, full-figured women seemed to me to have come from Andalusia, instead of from Vermont, they were so graceful, so well complexioned, so well developed. They were of the passionate type, too: long black lashes, black eyes, deep rich complexions, not wanting, some of them, the delicate mustache which adds to the beauty of a dark, well-featured face. Had they been at home, in Spain, what guitar tinklings, what madrigals, what fans! Ten duennas apiece would not have protected these dashing creatures from insidious love-letters, thrust into the most taper fingers in all the world. And yet they were the most thoroughly regulated, studious, industrious, calculating set of Puritans imaginable. I use the word 'calculating' advisedly. It expresses that arithmetical arrangement of the duties which I have never met except in the New England female mind. Not calculating in the sense of taking advantage of others, but calculating rigidly how much they could take out of themselves. No studying how to throw up those thick, long, curly lashes; no studying to make the teeth, white as a slice of cocoanut, more radiant by a comprehensive smile; not a particle of natural extravagance in dress. If a scarlet bow flowed out under a dusky, dimpled chin, it came out because it was in the blood. It could not be helped; it was not sought. In fact, they were badly dressed with great attention to economy. They chose their gowns, even in that sweet, early spring time,—when girls should be like the flowers, only engaged in blushing,—for qualities that would wear well,

as the vicar chose his wife. They were neat as pins. 'It was their nature to;' not neat because it looked well, but clean because they liked it; sweet as cloverbeds, fresh as June roses; but badly shod, badly corseted, badly *coiffée*. Their thoughts, meantime, were keeping noble company; their hands were doing useful work. Rich, as well as poor, learned the noble household arts. They were not good linguists, nor nearly so highly accomplished as the women of New York, or of New Orleans, or of Charleston; but they were thoroughly educated in history and geography, they were good mathematicians, excellent logicians, great thinkers, and possessed of an omnivorous thirst for knowledge, which drove them with scorpion whips to lectures, to the feet of such men as Agassiz, Emerson, and Wendell Phillips, unbending occasionally to listen to some lesser authority, but filled (the dear creatures) with the finest poetical sense; violet-hooded doctors, sweet, starry-eyed, pure dreamers, devoted to Tennyson, to Longfellow, to Whittier, to Bryant, and to Lowell, to all poets, and excellent Shakespeareans, — every one. Never were there such clear, north star, crystalline consciences. The Puritan mothers must have been very superior to the Puritan fathers. I think the women of New England escaped much of that avarice and narrowness, that — something — which has been (perhaps falsely) called cheating, which is said by their enemies to enter into the modern New England mind — the masculine half. New England women may be cold, may be forbidding, may be plainly dressed, even sour-faced, but they are not cheats. I think it is a talent they have not. Now we all know that after marriage the life of a French flirt begins. To attract men, to gain lovers and to be admired, — to heighten every beauty, to dress the foot becomingly, to tint the cheek and hair, to be *coquette* in every movement and action, — that is the study of three quarters of the female population of the globe. One must believe, after seeing the world widely, that it is the average female mind; that it is

an instinct, not necessarily a bad one, though sometimes, it is to be feared, leading to other consequences than good ones.

"The typical New England woman knows nothing of this side of life. It is so far off from her that the temptation can scarcely be said to exist. It does not come near enough to be denied. The idea of making herself agreeable to any man but her husband! She would sooner steal, murder, poison. In fact, some ungenerous critics have said of her that she has the defects of her qualities, and does not even make herself agreeable to *him*, but this idea I repudiate. Imagine the two contrasted lives! The European woman in her velvet and pearls, at forty, busily engaged in being fascinating. She succeeds in looking perhaps ten years younger than she is. She has felt much emotion in her day. She can talk beautifully about her past, her present, and her future. She classifies the passions admirably. She is preëminently the woman to invite to dinner. What tact, what *esprit*, what *espièglerie*. One must use French words to describe her. Who is her God? Self. Who the first, last, ever-present being to her? Herself. She shuns suffering, she abhors a wrinkle. Every hour of the day must have its amusement. She may be very amiable, do no wrong, be a very comfortable, comforting, good woman in her way. She would be miserably *ennuyée* without a love-affair, but would consider it wretched taste to go too far.

"Where is the typical New England woman at forty? She is where she has always been, doing her duty. If she wears velvet and pearls, it is under protest; she may be obliged to do so by an exacting and rich husband, but she does not like it. She is thinking of his business, his advancement, his advancement, and the boys' education. Whether Dartmouth, or Harvard, or Yale, — that is the question. If she has daughters, she goes out with them in the plainest gown that will pass muster. *She* in love with anybody! *She* desirous of showing her foot! — and it is apt to be a very slender and very pretty one, — perish all

such rubbish! She would not believe that such horrible and wicked nonsense existed, did she not read a French novel occasionally to see if it were proper that the girls might possibly read it."

"I believe that it would bore a New England woman," said our host, "to be obliged, under any pressure of circumstances, to take up, after her one heart experience is over, any sort of successor to it. The element in which other women exist, the vanity, coquetry, or sentiment, call it what you will, which is so much a part of most women's lives, is left out of hers. She hates it, repudiates it even, if she knows it. Generally she does not know it."

"That is so," said Harrison. "Now why and wherefore? Whence this difference? It is not climate, for Russia is much colder, and we know what is morality in Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. It is not religion, for in no part of the world has any one sect or church so little apparent influence as in New England. In fact, some of the most moral and conscientious women I have ever known have been practically infidels. I do not think the descendants of the Puritans are religious; at least not emotionally so; and indeed, is emotional religion any restraint upon the evil passions? No, I fear not. It does not keep women virtuous, or men honest. It is begging the question to call in education, for what is education but an outcropping of ourselves? Besides, education is far more strict, far more silent, in France than here. Young girls are brought up over there with cotton stuffed in their ears.

"Is it tradition? Is it the old Puritan atmosphere still circling around Plymouth Rock? What was there in that stone? Was it an aerolite? Was it a meteoric fragment dropped from the moon? Diana's crescent, pure and pale, rises over that fortunate land which surrounds our national blarney stone. It is the 'field mark and device' of a large and influential type, as is also 'the icicle which hangs on Diana's temple' "—Here the host interposed. "No matter about the rest of the quotation."

"Icicles are sometimes hard," said Majoribanks.

"Very hard; so are New England women! One who had lived longer in Paris than she had on Beacon Street would not know anybody from Boston whom she had not known in Beacon Street, as I remarked before. It is a strong and refreshing trait in an American. I love to be so local. The Philadelphians have this trait. The old-time Revolutionary aristocracy clings to Philadelphia much more than that which would be so much more natural, a Revolutionary democracy. New York is but a conglomerate of all nations; therefore people who leave New York for a European life seldom come back, or regret it, or carry any memories of it. It is but leaving a lesser Paris for a greater Paris; the greater wins.

"The life of a New England woman up to thirty years ago must have been one of hardship. She had the climate to struggle against; she saw her children die of scarlet fever and croup, or the older ones go off into consumption; she had to struggle (and always will have to) with incompetent servants. Life was a battle to both sexes. There is a tombstone over a husband and wife in a New England burying-ground at which people smile. 'Their warfare is accomplished;' such is the legend. There was a warfare, no doubt, within sometimes, certainly without.

"But I never knew a New England heroine beaten. I have seen her assailed by all the enemies of our race,—sickness, poverty, misfortune, disgrace, and sorrow,—and she has conquered them all. I have seen her as an export to the West, that West which *she* has made the prosperous land that it is; and I have admired her bent form, her sallow paleness, her patient mouth, from which that pearly gleam had departed, far more than the most roseate bloom, the most Venus-like outline. I have seen her so courageous, so simple in her devotion to duty, and yet so beyond Joan of Arc in her heroism, that I have said to myself, 'Duty is beauty; the rhyme was wrong.'"

"This abnegation of self," said our host, "this devotion to principle, should be — we fondly boast that it is — an integral part of that Anglo-Saxon race from which we spring."

"Yes, — perhaps; hunger and cold proved the iron determination of the Puritan race. It knew no primrose path of dalliance; luxury and travel and the progress of the age have altered the conditions; we no longer eat the fine kernels of corn. The primroses do spring in our path, our houses and lives are luxurious, but this Mayflower remains unsullied and fresh, fragrant as when Priscilla stooped and picked the pink and white buds, and gave them to John Alden with a blush, 'herself a fairer flower.' The type of the New England woman has not departed; it flourishes still.

"Old Count Gorowski, a great student of race, said that he would venture to tell the nationality of any crime. If poisoning, it was apt to be Italian; if lying, French; if brutal, English; if cunning, Spanish; if cheating, American; if all five, Russian! That was a somewhat severe *résumé* of his country, and undoubtedly breathed in one of the moments of irritability for which he was famous. Some one suggested that he had left out Poland. 'Oh!' said he, 'the Poles do not know enough to be grandly bad, they are such fools.'"

The Englishman had listened patiently and with respect to this long tirade. "You have been a great traveler, I hear," said he, when his turn came.

"Yes," said the American, "twenty years in China, ten more in the Indian provinces, ten in Europe, living in all the great cities, but principally in Paris."

"Not in England much, I suppose?"

"No, only a few visits in the season."

"And how much in your own country?"

"The first twenty years of my life, and five years since. I own up to sixty-five, as you see."

"The first twenty years of our lives are years in which we see only the best," said the Englishman, reflectively.

"Oh! I have been home in the intervals," said the American; "I am not

speaking from memory; besides, I have seen our exports everywhere."

"I claim the same type of character, the same purity, the same nobility, the same heroic self-denial, for the women of England," said the Englishman.

"You are right, with a difference," said Harrison. "The rhododendrons which are imported from America, and cultivated in English soil, are fuller in color, more redundant, far more magnificent as flowers and shrubs, than the native growth; but I have plucked in an American forest a bunch of rhododendrons of palest pink, or pure white, which was more delightfully beautiful than any cultivated one; it had that unique charm, that local flavor, that peculiarity, which I claim for my New England women," said the American.

"The root is the same!"

"That I grant. I yield to no man in my admiration for your countrywomen, but the conditions are widely different. An Englishwoman in any grade of life finds life cut out for her; an American woman must cut it out for herself. The typical New England woman makes everything for herself, from her bonnet up to her destiny. She can be anything; there are no limitations to her ambition. She fits herself unconsciously for the position of wife to a foreign ambassador. If that fate does not come, she accepts patiently the position of wife to a country doctor. But the reading, and the dignity, and the sense of position are kept up. This enormous self-respect seldom leaves her; she is a peeress in her own right, without the estates."

"How do you account for the coldness of manner? I should think that such good women would be more amiable," said our host.

"Adversity is more becoming to the New England woman than prosperity, I grant you. Sometimes, when I have not admired her so much, wrapped up in the latter, her natural reserve becomes something which appears like a purse-proud disdain. Her conscientious truthfulness does not shine well in a society where a satin hypocrisy rules, and her unused talents make her

sometimes uncomfortable. She is conscious of the 'latent misery of a baffled instinct.' She is never so great, so good, so lovely, or so much herself, as when she is conquering an adverse destiny; she is made to 'suffer and be strong.' As a hostess in a great house, she sometimes seems wanting in cordiality; as the wife of a secretary of state, a president, or a foreign ambassador, she would be intelligent enough, elegant enough, dignified enough; but whether she is always sufficiently gracious, I am doubtful. She is elective, she wants the best; I am inclined to think that the ignorant, the pretentious, and the bores would decide that her manners were not so cordial as those of Mrs. Breckenridge Clay Rutledge, of the South."

"I should know exactly what crimes a New England woman would commit," said our hostess. "I agree with Gorowski about the *locale* of crime; hers would be crimes against the agreeable. She might be capable of great hardness toward the man she loved if he did not come up to her standard of faith. If she found him untrue to his principles and hers, she would leave him and denounce him; that is to say, my type would; she would be most unmerciful. His sins toward herself she might forgive, but not a dishonesty of creed or conscience."

"She cultivates her conscience more than her heart, then?" said a very pretty woman, not from New England.

"I am afraid so," said Harrison, reluctantly.

Our host, a thoughtful man, here said a few pertinent words. "I should know that your typical woman would not take a bribe, or feel the temptations of ordinary women as to dress and social power; but would she not possibly become a political Cleopatra, an antislavery Delilah, and use some wiles unworthy of the Mayflower standard to advance the cause she advocates and believes in, — some high-toned flatteries, some eloquent arguments?" —

"Never! As well expect to find a pine-apple, or a cactus, growing in the

untropical streets of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, as to find such an one!" said the undaunted Harrison.

"Perhaps she is ignorant, like — you know — Gorowski's Poles; perhaps," began Majoribanks, "she would not know how to be so fascinating."

Harrison looked baffled, but recovered himself in a moment. "Exactly! She does not know; she has not the instinct of Cleopatra or Delilah; a bribe does not reach her brain; she is cut off, poor thing, by the limitations of her being, from some very admirable vices."

"I have seen — that is, there are — there were — some very beautiful ones in England, last summer; very nice ones, too. Gainsborough type, you know," said Majoribanks, as if extenuating, and setting down naught in malice.

"Yes, that type prevails in Boston, also the willow pattern; don't leave out, either, my Andalusians. I believe also that a tribe of gypsies went through one county, and that the daughters of the Zingari married into the best families. I drink to their fine eyes!"

"Harrison, you grow incoherent," said our host.

"It is the caracua!"

"I think," said our hostess, "if I have followed the conversation aright, that you have made us out a cold, forbidding set, even with all your praises!"

"I have met — that is — I have perhaps — yes — haw — I have met some that were cordial," said Majoribanks.

"There are," said Harrison, gravely, "some queens who rule the world: some Northern women with Southern manners, some Southern women with all the sincerity and directness of Northern souls. We cannot mark off the virtues, the faults, or the manners, by latitude or longitude. We cannot define that geographical boundary where the Yankee twang ends, or the New York accent begins, yet we who have ears can hear, and mark it as we go."

"I have — the accent — it is strange — I don't know — yes — hem — I have heard — that you know a Philadelphian by his talk, and can tell — that is to say, perhaps — a Western man's State, or

if New England, what you call Yankee drawl—or is it that there can be local accent?" asked Majoribanks, getting completely swamped.

"Yes, I assure you, definite as Yorkshire or Kingsley's county talk. Remember his Derbyshire? And more than definite is the type of our New England export"—

"Supposing you change the simile," said our hostess, interrupting him, and pulling a lily from the flowers in the *épergne* and handing it to Harrison, as she signaled to us to move off.

"Yes," said he, accepting the flower. "Wherever I have seen her, on a silver lake, on the secluded shaded wave of a lonely river, my pure New England flower; or on the marshy, disturbed surface of some suburban inlet, or the malarious, broad plane of Western waters, it was the same white flower, it was always the lily."

As we left the dining-room and walked off to the parlor, the Englishman confided to me that he thought Harrison had too many words, and was given to bragging.

M. E. W. S.

CONTENT.

THEY may be worlds, but let me for to-night
Gaze on the beauty of yon liquid blue,
Studded with gems whose iridescent light
Trembles the soft air through.

True, it were wise to name each separate part
That helps to form this delicate rich rose;
But let me, foolishly, look in its heart,
And mark how fair it glows.

Books tell of wondrous secrets buried deep,
Written upon the rocks,—and it may be;
The grass is green; let all beneath it sleep,—
The new green world for me!

I do not care to hear the ancient tale
Of magi, prophets, patriarchs of old;
A sweeter story doth this flowery vale,
Low-tinkling stream, and purple air unfold.

Let me a little while forget my years,
See with a child's eyes for a little while;
Let me forget that there be death or tears
In Nature's golden smile.

Catherine J. Schiller.

THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB.

Author. Do the critical notices which appear in the newspapers have any influence on the sale of a book?

Publisher. That is a question which I have been studying these twenty years. I would rather solve that problem than discover a gold-mine. In fact, it would be equivalent to discovering a gold-mine. If newspaper praise insured a book's success, or newspaper condemnation prevented it, we publishers would know where we stand. It would be a fine thing for literature, too; for none but books of striking merit would have much chance of getting into print. The skillful literary workman would be pretty sure of his hire.

Author. I am not so positive about that. Publishers are human, and might publish poor books; critics are very human, and would be sure to praise them. An inferior workman would probably be praised by the column, just as he is now, and the true artist would be dismissed, as he often is, with a contemptuous paragraph. No, I prefer things to remain as they are. I like to see a meritorious work making its mark in spite of dull or malicious misappreciation. Until our critics are trained men, as most of our professional authors are, it is best that their verdicts, favorable or unfavorable, should carry no weight. But is it true that they carry no weight?

Publisher. Heaven only knows, — the trade does n't. I have sometimes been tempted to ascribe the success of a book to the disparaging criticism it has received. But it's all a tangle. Here's a work which fell dead; out of eighty journals to which it was sent for review only three handled it severely, and those three were journals not likely to hurt anything unless they indorsed it. This work is an authority on the subject of which it treats. Its appearance was saluted with volleys of type from the best batteries. It died without a struggle. On the other hand, there's X's novel.

I accepted it out of personal kindness for the author. X's father was an old schoolmate of mine. I printed one thousand copies and bound only five hundred. Before the critics could get at it I was obliged to bind up the remaining five hundred and print five hundred more. While those were in the bindery an order came by telegram for one thousand. To cut short a long story, ten thousand copies of X's novel were disposed of almost in secrecy, so far as the press was concerned. I am now printing the twenty-fifth thousand. I know of a work — I wish I had it on my list — of which eight or ten thousand copies have been sold every year for the last five or six years. I am not aware that during that time the title of the book has been so much as mentioned in any newspaper; the publisher has not spent five cents in advertising it; I believe it does not even appear in his catalogue.

Author. I know the work to which you allude so feelingly. It has no great merit.

Publisher. It has the merit of selling eight or ten thousand copies per annum. I've known books with greater faults than that. Moreover, it *has* merit. Every book which wins a wide circulation has merit of some sort; it supplies some precise need, — possibly an illiterate, low-born need, but still a need. If one could only find out what that is, and supply it!

Author. Yet another book which shall resemble this, yea, as one pea resembleth another pea, would probably fall as dead as —'s poems.

Publisher. That's the perplexing part of it. A publisher brings out A History of Ten-Penny Nails, and makes his fortune; another publisher brings out A History of Eleven-Penny Nails (a superior work), and offers to settle with his creditors at fifteen cents on the dollar. Then, again, a whole string of wishy-washy stories meet with a large sale simply because their titles bear a resem-

blance to the title of a previous wishy-washy story which happened to strike the public fancy. In book-publishing experience goes almost for nothing. I regard every new book I publish as a lottery ticket. Asterisk's first book was a decided hit; I am fifteen hundred dollars out of pocket on his second book. It had far more sense in it,—and not so many dollars. It was highly, extravagantly praised, and the former was scarcely noticed. I tell you it is a lottery. This is why a publisher is willing to pay a new man the same percentage he pays an established author. That does not seem quite fair, you think. But observe: the publisher knows that a fresh book from the established author is pretty certain to sell so many copies, and dead certain not to go beyond that; but the new man!—there's no knowing what the new man may do. He bristles with potential possibilities. He may be a twenty-edition fellow! To come back to the newspapers: I fancy that in most instances a book sells itself without any regard to the critics.

Author. Then you believe that the public—the great public which buys books—does not bother itself much about Literary Notices. I agree with you. There are just four persons who read a review, long or short: first, the writer of the review; second, the author reviewed; third, the author's publisher; and fourth, the author's friend,—if the review happens to be unfavorable. I take it that people unacquainted, personally, with authors, publishers, and journalists very seldom, if ever, glance at that busy column in which literary reputations are supposed to be made or unmade. The merchant, I imagine, no more thinks of reading the literary items than an author thinks of turning to the shopping list or the prices current. Yet for all that the merchant may purchase his ten or twenty books in the course of the year, and possibly has his favorite authors. An author really has two distinct reputations: he may rank very high with the critics and very low with the general public, or *vice versa*.

Publisher. You don't seem to think

much of the critics. They have always treated you handsomely, if I remember.

Author. And I have always treated them handsomely,—by trying not to bore them too often. But in discussing this question I set myself aside. I care greatly for criticism. The critical faculty is the very rarest. Epic poets are more plentiful than good critics. The great critics of the world can be counted on the fingers of one hand and not exhaust all the fingers. The really great critic comes only once in a century, if so often as that. He is a *rara avis*, a white blackbird. During the last four decades, see what a numerous brood of brilliant writers France has produced!—but only one Sainte-Beuve. The world may wait a hundred years for another of his feather.

Publisher. To come nearer home: is n't Threestars a fine critic?

Author. He has an analytical mind, and his opinion on a work of philosophy or metaphysics is entitled to the highest respect. No one could discourse more amiably on the age of Confucius. In a narrow groove he is certainly a fine critic; but narrowness is the one thing not permissible in a critic. With the profoundest learning he should have the freshest sympathies and the most catholic tastes. Seneca should not be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. Yet we find men setting up as critics whose sole stock in trade consists of their individual likes and dislikes. By the bye, have you looked over that manuscript which I left with you the other day?

Publisher. The Tears of the Muses? Oh, yes; delightful,—delightful! But, really, I don't see how I can help you shed those charming tears just at present. My list of publications for the coming season is quite full,—too full, in fact,—and nothing is selling. I shall have to ask you to wait a year—or two.

Author, walking away moodily. What a fraud that man is!

—In studying Chaucer lately, I have been led to meditate a paper on the Impertinences of Editors. Is it not impertinent, for example, for an editor to define words in an old author which are

explained with accuracy in our Worcester and Webster? It seems to me offensive and depreciatory of a reader's intelligence to annotate passages and allusions in an early writer which would not be thought to need explanation if found in a book of the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

Suppose that I am editing Willmott's works, and come to the following passage; shall I annotate it thus:—

"Think of beholding in a clear glass¹ Macchiavelli² living along the lines of his political web;³ Galileo⁴ watching the moon plow⁵ her way across the clouds; or Tasso,⁶ with Polybius⁷ in his hand,⁸ marshaling the Knights of Godfrey."⁹

¹ Glass. Mirror.

² Macchiavelli. Niccolò Macchiavelli was secretary of the Florentine republic for a number of years in the fifteenth century.

³ Political web. Macchiavelli wrote a book on statesmanship which has identified his name with political craftiness, and it renders appropriate the expression "political web."

⁴ Galileo. An Italian astronomer of the sixteenth century.

⁵ Plow. This expression is to be taken metaphorically, agricultural implements not being used at so high an elevation.

⁶ Tasso. An Italian poet who lived in the sixteenth century. His baptismal name was Torquato. His chief work was *Jerusalem Delivered*. The reader will notice Mr. Willmott's familiarity with Italian history at this period, as exhibited in the freedom with which he mentions the great names of that country.

⁷ Polybius. A Greek historian of the second century before the Christian era.

⁸ In his hand. This is a figurative expression. Polybius had died before the time of Tasso, and Mr. Willmott would have the reader understand that one of the books of Polybius was in the hand of the later author, and not the historian himself.

⁹ Godfrey. The leader of the first Crusade was Godfrey of Boulogne, and he it is to whom Mr. Willmott probably refers, for he became king of Jerusalem, and is celebrated in Tasso's poem.

Perhaps I am a trifle generous in my annotations, but I find some that are not entirely unlike them in certain editions of Chaucer.

— Scandal, that is, spoken scandal, has doubtless been much mitigated in the course of the last century, as one of the Club set forth in our June conference. The amelioration of life in this respect is an accompaniment of that general improvement in the moral tone of society which has taken place during

the last three generations. For there has been improvement in this respect, that is, on the moral side; and there has moreover been a steady setting towards a greater mildness of manners among the whole body social, although the manners of even the best-bred people are not quite so fine now as they were among the same sort of folks in the days of our grandfathers. This class has spared something of its superfluity in manners to those less fortunately placed people who were in need of such endowment. Hence the scandal-monger has for some time been out of favor in decent society. The sort of women who used to go about blackening the reputations of other people, and particularly those of other women, has almost disappeared: partly because such talk would not now be tolerated in society of any pretensions to moral tone or to decorum; and partly because the desire, the willingness, to harm others by bearing witness, false or true, against them has in a great measure been bred out of us by the bettering influences developed in mankind by time and by reflection.

When, however, we come to consider the question whether the appetite for scandal has diminished, an answer favorable to our moral improvement is not so easily found. For we have only to look through our newspapers to see that this appetite must be insatiable if it does not find itself fed every day to surfeiting. The supply indicates the demand; in no respect does the cardinal axiom of the dreary science apply so absolutely as in journalism. The publisher of the newspaper is imperative upon this point,—inexorable. What "our readers" demand, that they must have; what offends them must be excluded. Judged from this point of view, society in regard to scandal has become like the Turk in regard to dancing: he does not dance himself, but he likes very well to have it done for him. And his vicarious salutation is far higher-kilted, to use a Scotch phrase, than any in which he would personally indulge, unless, indeed, he were to undertake to rival a royal poet whom he much respects, — David,

in his dance before the ark, "girded only with a linen ephod." So the scandal that is spread before us in print every day shows not only our craving, but how much stronger a dose of this mental stimulant we can take in silence than in colloquial intercourse. Our servants the reporters rake the courts, great and small, the lobbies, the public offices, the vestry-rooms, — even, alas, the drawing-rooms; and our friends the interviewers pursue, like Horace's Death, *æquo pede*, every human creature from whom there is the slightest hope of extracting material for a "sensation;" and a sensation in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred is made at the cost of more or less pain (and generally needless pain) to an individual and to his family and friends. And with what sublime indifference to the question of the truth or falsity of his story does our sensation-monger serve us up the dish of savory meat which our soul loveth! Only let there be the least occasion for it, or, above all, the slightest chance that another paper than that for which he labors will be the first to publish it, and if he get a sensational story upon any authority, or upon none, he unfolds his tale, and stings with it. Not that he cares particularly to sting, unless he may happen to have a grudge to satisfy, but simply that he regards mankind as material for and readers of sensation articles. Let any one who looks through the newspapers daily recollect the number of stories, more or less scandalous, which he has seen published during the past year and flatly contradicted by the persons who alone have competent knowledge in the matter, if indeed there be any matter; for, as we all know, stories are constantly published, — painful and injurious stories, full of detail which makes them truthful in seeming, — which are simply scandal and without foundation in fact. One of the most active dispensers of this sort of scandal is the Boston, New York, or Washington correspondent of some paper outside of those cities. His letters are frequently nothing but scandalous stories, that journals in the places to which they relate would not publish at

first hand; but they will copy them with the saving preface, "The — correspondent of the — writes thus." And away a reputation goes; that is, would go, if we had not come to doubt, if not to disbelieve, everything of this kind that is not thoroughly established on grounds known to us. I was shown the other day a long letter in a Washington newspaper filled with a tale of scandal about a well-known gentleman; and the gentleman who showed it to me, who was in a position to know the whole truth, said, "There are twenty-seven assertions in that letter, and just twenty-seven of them are absolutely untrue; the whole story from beginning to end is absolutely false." Nor need a story be slanderous to make its publication the cause of annoyance to those to whom it refers. Their wishes, however, are not in the slightest degree regarded. Only a short time ago the daughter of a friend of my family who lives in the country, who is an entirely private person, and who has no more prominence than is given by wealth, culture, and character, was married. To my friend's surprise, reporters came fifty miles, from New York, and, asking to see him, put him to the question about the whole affair, the ceremony, and the parties to it. He decidedly but respectfully refused to give them any of the particulars about which they were so anxious, and told them that it would be very unpleasant to him and to his whole family to have any public notice taken of the marriage. Vain man! the next day he saw the whole affair set forth in two New York papers, the reporters having fished out the particulars from other parties. And but a short time since I saw announced the birth of a child to a lady who had threatened nothing of the kind for ten years and more, and who was likely to be much annoyed by congratulations upon an event which had not taken place. Now, to marry is not sinful, or to have children criminal; and a story published that one does either or both is not a libel, and therefore is not punishable at the law. But it should be so, unless done by consent of the parties in-

terested. For stories may not be damaging to business or to reputation, and may be true, and yet may therefore be none the less likely to give pain. No class of men ought to be allowed to give pain to private persons in order that they may make money by gratifying the prurient curiosity of thoughtless women—and men. What we need for the remedying of this evil is a law like the French law, which makes the publication of any purely private and personal matter, however true or however harmless, an offense punishable on the complaint of the party offended. For, O reader, the other and more effectual remedy, which you could begin to apply yourself, will not be applied, I think. It is, not to read scandal, and to let the editor and the publisher of the paper that prints scandal know, in the most effective way, that you find scandal, tattle, and personal gossip offensive.

—It is a favorite assertion of the mathematicians that figures cannot lie; yet here are two learned contributors to an educational journal of high rank fairly by the ears over the expression "1800 A. D." One contends that it marks the last year of the eighteenth century; the other rejoins, with a quiet assurance which is suggestive of Mr. Furnivall, that it cannot indicate anything but the first year of the nineteenth century, — in other words, that the year 1800 A. D. was the 1801st year of the Christian era. I have been greatly entertained by the argument of the latter writer. In setting up mile-stones, he says, we do not put No. 1 at the starting-point, but at the end of the first mile. "In referring to the clock at the beginning of the day, we do not call the time 1 o'clock, but 0 o'clock [do we, though?], and during the first hour we read 0-05, 0-10, etc., until one hour has passed, when we read 1 o'clock." So also the one used to denote a child's age is used not at birth but at the end of the first year. Having elaborated these three examples, the writer asks, "Why do not these same rules apply in the use of dates for marking points or divisions of an era? Why should not the dates 1, 100, or 1800 be

understood to denote that one year, one hundred or eighteen hundred years have passed since the beginning of the era?" Apparently he sees no radical difference between separating dates and separated periods. To apply his idea, he says that during the first year of the era one might properly write "April 12;" during the second year, "April 12, 1;" the latter expression indicating that one year and three months have passed, and that the twelfth day of the fourth month of the second year of the era is now reached.

I still cling to the delusion of my boyhood, however, and wonder why, if the mile-stone argument is apt for the year, it is not equally so for the day; why, if the 1 shows that one year has passed and the second has been reached, the 12 does not in like manner show that twelve days of the month have passed and the thirteenth has been reached.

—This truthful record of what a man has done in and made by literary work during the ten years to January 1, 1878, must be interesting to many, and of service to some, — the latter those who think of adopting literature as a profession.

In eight principal magazines published in those ten years, and of which five remained in existence on the 1st of January, 1878, I have had nineteen articles, for which my pay was \$927. In five weekly publications my work has appeared nine times, and brought me \$138. From two daily papers I have received \$24 for reviews, and \$52 for correspondence. Receipts from the above sources, \$1141. Then I wrote a short romance and published it at my own expense, getting the imprint of a book-house in New York. That netted me a profit of \$198. During the time named I have written three other books of fiction, published by one of the most celebrated houses in the country. Of all, 4600 copies were printed, and 4500 sold, netting me at ten per cent., as copyright, \$562.49, and paying to the publishers \$3302.57, — this at wholesale rates, and not deducting expenses of publication; probably the publishers cleared but little more than the author. The sum total of my pay for lit-

erary labor is \$1901.49, and, estimating roughly, it has consumed about a year's or fifteen months' time, at eight hours per day. I have had, fortunately, other occupations by which to eke out a living. Of the four books, three are now out of print. One was republished in England. All appeared over a *nom de plume*. So did my other writings, except, perhaps, half a dozen, and in omitting my proper name I made a great mistake. Literary work without signature is a bond without interest. Let the young author remember this.

Having done now with the figures of this paper, I will give some incidents of my experience with editors and publishers. A manuscript of mine, ordered in December, had lain in an editor's hands three months. This fact I had mentioned to a gentleman who is one of our best and most voluminous magazine writers and novelists. He wrote me, "Mr. Editor spoke most favorably in a recent letter of your —, but did not explain the delay. . . . By the way, editors are sometimes unreasonable, even the best of them. If the — magazine turns out too fastidious, or impracticable, or anything of that sort, why not try the —? Of course — would not like this suggestion, but one must live and let live; the world is not for editors alone." Seven months after the letter from which the above is taken was received, the article referred to appeared in print, without resource to the —, and my friend, writing me again, said, "I read — last evening. I have read it through carefully, with entire satisfaction and with great pleasure, and even with surprise. Certainly it is extraordinarily well written, and is the best — which I have ever seen in an American periodical. It must attract wide attention to you." It did not, and when published, after eleven months' delay, payment did not come with its appearance in print. But a few lines to the magazine's publishers put me in possession of their check for \$75. Without naming any price at the time the article was sent in, I had left that to the fairness of the editor, and I think he treated well enough a comparatively

unknown writer, though the pay should have been, according to that magazine's custom per page, \$104. One of our most popular magazinists wrote me once concerning the very small pay that the — had sent me for a story: "Thirty dollars was very small pay for six pages, in small print, of matter that was readable, interesting, and worthy of insertion. At the same time, editors pay more for *notoriety* than for *quality*. Now there are several publics, and each has its celebrities. I am an old writer for the magazines, and therefore I get more than that, but I did not a few years ago. Even now I dare not ask above \$10 a page, believing that that is all a magazine can afford, except for an out-and-out notoriety. A new man must work on, painfully and patiently, for years, every now and then demanding a rise in his wages. There must be bargaining as well as writing. The next time you send a piece to —, write your price at the top of the MS., thus: 'Price \$60,' or, 'Price \$80.' If he declines, send it on to the next, and the next. See how it will come out. I am sorry you find the road of authorship profitless. So it is with nearly all who try it. I am never less than a few hundred dollars in debt, and often wish that I had some other trade, more profitable, — a machinist's, for instance."

The editor of a magazine once accepted a contribution of mine in this way: "Your story is not of the kind which has been usually found most attractive to our readers. It is, however, picturesquely conceived, and the interest fairly sustained, and I shall therefore be happy to insert it, paying on publication at five dollars a page." As this story had been returned by — and —, I accepted. It appeared in *eighteen* months from the date of the editor's letter, and I waited that time for the pay, \$73. Meanwhile, I happened in the city where my editor reigned, and, laid flat by an acute attack of impecuniosity, I called at the office of the magazine and begged an advance of \$5(!), which was granted. Why tailors and authors must always wait for payment I cannot exactly understand.

I was once ambitious to write editorials for the New York Daily —. Mr. A B was then the literary editor, and Mr. Y Z, as now, the commander-in-chief. I obtained a proper introduction to Mr. Y Z through a prominent politician, who was his personal friend. I had a pleasant and rather promising interview that ended in my leaving with him two MSS. on social subjects, which he promised to put in the hands of Mr. A B. A week or two after, my friend sent me the following letter, which he had received from Mr. Y Z: —

I herewith return Mr. —'s articles, and in doing so wish to say to him that he need not be discouraged in keeping on, as our best writers have been those who did not reach the point of excellence until after many failures. Let him send us articles as he may find subjects to write upon; they shall be carefully and kindly considered, and used if possible, leading to perhaps a more permanent connection. As ever, sincerely yours,

Y Z.

I was not discouraged, but kept on, until I had sent in five pieces, not one of which was accepted, and some of which, I firmly believe, were never opened by the managing editor. Four of these rejected contributions found market elsewhere, and one of them was copied in the Sunday edition after its refusal by the Daily —.

In the memoirs of Count de Grammont (?) we read of an elegant French duelist who, whenever — and it was often — he sent his short sword clean into an antagonist, exclaimed, with pathetic courtesy "Mille pardons!" This was like — of the —. He pierced you with a rejection, but he added an *amende*, as once he wrote to me, "Your work is always so good that I don't feel like losing any of it. The article just received exceeds our space. I should be glad if you would allow me to exchange it for something else of yours." Another magazine editor, returning a manuscript, sent these words: "Your MS. goes with this letter. It is one that will find hearty

welcome in any magazine but this, where, because of certain, etc. I am obliged, etc. I think, if you will pardon the suggestion, that it would be eagerly accepted by George Macdonald's Good Words, published in London." I thankfully took the advice, paid over a dollar in postage, and inclosed a like amount, and that was the last I ever heard of what I thought was a good piece of work.

Nearly a year ago, I took an article to the editor of —. He opened the sheets and read them through (at least twelve magazine pages) whilst I sat there. "First-rate!" then he said, "just what I want, — interesting and *timely*. I'll take it. Call again to-morrow." I discounted the payment with a fine dinner and a grand bottle of wine. In the morning I stepped in for my pay. "I have shown your MS. to Mr. —. He says it must have illustrations. Can you supply them?" "No, it is impossible." As I went away, I asked: "What should I get for this article?" "Do not take less than one hundred dollars. Send it to the — magazine, and it must be copied in England." I sent it, — always obeying an editor; and it hung fire for three months. I reclaimed it, and ere its *timeliness* was quite gone I sold it for half what the illustrated editor named.

So I might go on for columns concerning the anxieties, disappointments, and labors of literary work by one of small name, — aye, and these troubles come, too, more or less, to all authors except the great celebrities (*they* may be literary artists, mountebanks, scolds, or quacks); but I shall give only one more instance. The best piece of work I ever did went to a magazine with two editors, after having come back from four such journeys, and been accepted and after twenty days' thought rejected by another magazine. The junior editor returned it to me with these words, writing, as he probably supposed, to some entire novice in literature. The letter of advice came through a mutual friend: "It can't be used in the —. I have written a letter giving him some suggestions as to how to make his work *marketable*. He certainly has ability; he knows

how to view things, and can express himself with remarkable command of words. He now needs to study with great attention the mode of making himself compactly impressive to the public." The underscoring is my own. I may have smoked three pipes in succession over that patronizing epistle.

Thereafter I gave up my pen for eight months, and took to speculating in pigs. It was a new business, and had a flavor about it peculiarly recreative to a dead-beat author. There was a wild, gorgeous poetry in the statement (founded on figures that cannot lie, please remember) made me by my instigator to the porcine adventure. He—I mean the instigator, —lived in a fine rooting country, six hundred miles off to the south. I had nothing to do but plan, administer, forward checks, and count my profits four months ahead. He was to act, execute, buy, and perhaps share my profits. If I could not be famous in letters, I would at least be rich in hogs. Alas, there are figures that, as has been said here and elsewhere perhaps, cannot lie, and there is hog cholera! — worse, far worse than editors and publishers. Write, write, if you will, young man, but for Heaven's sake do not attempt the pig business. The latter, I know, requires more genius, but like all real labors of genius it will not pay. Its end is to make hashed sausage meat of you. What happened to me is of little consequence, except in the result, —that I took up my pen again. It was heavier now, and worked greasily, but I had learned boldness. My first act was to send off the rejected MS. of nearly a year ago to the other editor of the same magazine. He was summering by the sea-side, separated from his junior. In forty-eight hours I received the following lines: "I accept with great pleasure your —. It is a study of extraordinary force and vividness, and, I take it, must be from life. I wish you would do some more things like it." I have other confidences to make, but not now, to men who may have literary ambition, and may be, as I, "to fortune and to fame unknown."

—Ap[ro]pos of the notice contained in

The Contributors' Club for February of the reappearance on the scene, fresh as ever, of our old acquaintance the hero of *The Wide, Wide World*, I am reminded of a story told to me last September by friends who had just returned from Europe. It will be seen that that book has been setting fashions for us on the other side of the water without our being aware of the honor. My friends were spending several days last summer at the residence of an English gentleman. At dinner on the first day, I think with the joint, something dark in a little cup was passed to my friend's wife by the servant in waiting. She glanced at it, but could not make out what it was; thought it might be some mysterious English form of beef tea, or a sauce; concluded on the whole it would be safer to decline, and did so. Same pantomime gone through with the husband, who, also mystified, declined. Servant disappears with the cup, of which no one else is invited to partake, and dinner proceeds. But their kind hostess is evidently disturbed; at last she remarks, "Perhaps it was not strong enough; or was it too weak?" And then it appears that the dark liquid was tea, and that they "supposed you always drank tea with your dinner in America." "Where could you have obtained that impression?" said my friend. "From *The Wide, Wide World*," was the innocent answer. The simple country folk in that bucolic book are, it will be remembered, always pictured as drinking "tea" with their dinner; and if this little incident had not intervened that English family would have forever supposed that all Americans did the same!

—There is nothing so majestic and slow-moving to-day in all our quick America as an old South Carolina gentleman, for instance, making a few remarks to you in your parlor, or on the Charleston Battery. His words, his periods, his very thoughts, are all old English. There is no use in trying to hurry him, and much loss. For, if you will only lay aside your modern impatience, and listen, your ears will soon be charmed by the very language of

Johnson and Addison. He never says "Mrs.," but always "Mistress;" his lips never syllable a contraction, but roll out their "do not," "can not," and "shall not" with slow precision; no chance expression of the day is aught to him. This stately, unhurrying way of talking is particularly apparent when you hear it from the sweet voices of the Southern ladies; their voices are much softer and richer than those of our Northern women, and modulated on a lower key. What gives an oddly contrasting local color to this dignified speech is the pronunciation of certain words, — a pronunciation probably caught in childhood from negro nurses. Almost all words in *ar* and *ere* have a *y* in them, or rather it is like this: *garden* is *gee-ar-den*, with the first two syllables run together; they tell you to take the *street kee-ars*; and *here* is *yere* or *h-yere*. The abbreviations of *mother* and *father*, that is, the words *ma* and *pa*, I defy any Northerner to imitate successfully; they might serve as a shibboleth for carpet-baggers. Hawthorne says somewhere that it is a good lesson for one who has dreamed of literary fame to step aside out of the narrow circle in which his claims are recognized, and see how utterly devoid of significance beyond that circle is all that he achieves and all that he aims at; and I advise the Northern writer of to-day, if he wishes this sort of lesson in its fullest strength, to go South! No matter who he is, no matter how honored in the circle, for instance, around The Atlantic, he will there find himself unknown. Not that Southerners of the best class are unliterary; in one way they are more literary than we are, for they have the old English essayists, dramatists, and poets at their tongues' end, and quote voluminously and well. But they seem never to have come down farther than about the middle of the last century; there they stop with their quotations. But the bewildered Atlantic man would not mind that so much if they would but stop entirely, — short off, as it were; with a little rubbing-up, he knows the old authors, too. Instead of that, however, these Southerners have made a chain, from

the leg of Addison, say, down to to-day, consisting of a succession of writers whose names he has hardly even heard, — he, a man of wide-open eyes, accurate memory, and the most catholic choice in reading. He is told of an essayist, "now living," whose work equals "anything in The Spectator;" of a novelist, "at present dying," whose power is "superior to Fielding;" of a poetess, "just dead," who was "the inspired soul of the century." All this with sincerest belief and earnestness, and said by intelligent persons. Books are put into his hands (generally badly printed), and there in type these productions face him; they are not, then, the manuscript children from whom great things are expected by friends, but on the contrary they are full-grown, clothed, and in their right minds. He begins to doubt whether he is in his! He turns over the pages in a confused sort of way, and at last mentions perhaps some well-known writer whose fame is in all the magazines; they have never heard of him. He then brings forward another, whose volumes are, as he supposes, distinctly recognized as among the best of the day; they do not know his name. He now drops America, flees to England, and holds up George Eliot and Charles Reade; they *have* heard these names, but vaguely. They begin a discussion upon Richardson and Miss Austen, and close with allusions to the latest tale by some "daughter of Georgia," or "child of the Southland." It must not be supposed that I am making fun; these titles are used and bestowed with both pride and affection by the people and the writers themselves. I have heard them, and others like them, many times. The number of these Southern writers is to-day larger than any one would dream who has not studied the subject; and the Atlantic man might well be proud of so ardent and loyal a following as many of them possess. Their own people believe in them heartily, — if no one else does. I have recently looked through a volume containing short biographies of Southern writers, and, out of two hundred and fifty names, recog-

nized about twenty! Of course I except, in these remarks, a few authors with whose works we are all acquainted; there are exceptions always. But I think no one who has lived for any length of time at the South will dispute the truth of what I have said. The Southerners have finer and costlier *old-fashioned* books than we have. The library at Charleston is piled to the ceiling with venerable mahogany-colored English bindings, which look as though they had been "through the wars," as they have. The handsome young librarian says, — but not apologetically; the Charlestonians never apologize, — "We have but few new books." He does not know how delightful and new it is to see nothing but old ones! But the quaintest little places are the "neighborhood libraries," in the country; not by any means established for "the people," as with us, for there were no "people," but for the pleasure of the planters' families in that neighborhood. Twice I have had the key of such little buildings, now almost always lonely and forsaken, and have spent hours taking down and looking through the dusty books. Almost all were fine old English editions of fine old English authors, together with some of the most famous Frenchmen, also; on a lower shelf, the "Southland" writers. I call to mind now a courteous, white-haired gentleman of the old school, who had retired to a remote little village with the poor remains of his fortune and his library. On a dry-goods box covered with chintz reposed the few superb old volumes which he had saved; the remainder, he said, were "burned at Columbia, when Major-General Sherman did us the honor to pass through. The soldiers, I am informed, heated their coffee with them." He never touched a newspaper, or saw a modern book; but he used to read aloud to his wife on summer afternoons from these old volumes, and discuss their contents with any one who came in. Sitting there and listening, one almost forgot that there was any present, or any George Eliot, or even any Atlantic, save the ocean.

—In your review of Judge Caton's book on the Antelope and Deer of America, in the March number of *The Atlantic*, you help to disseminate a grave error into which he has fallen, concerning the area of country over which the black-tailed deer is distributed. Of course the author was misinformed, as, had he any personal knowledge on the subject in question, he would not have made such an error when writing as a specialist.

I have lived, since the war, in the States and Territories north of the Arkansas and south of the Yellowstone rivers, and have hunted in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and Dakota; I have found the black-tail in all these States and Territories, and I am reliably informed that it abounds in Idaho and New Mexico; in fact, it is found as widely distributed east of the Sierras as west of them.

As to the antelope shedding their horns yearly, as do the deer, elk, etc., their antlers, it is considered an open question where antelope abound; but as Judge Caton has had an opportunity for careful personal observation on this point, and as it is not probable that any abnormal habit in this respect should obtain when antelope are removed from their native plains and confined as were those observed by Judge Caton, of course he is right.

I have seen buck antelope killed at all seasons of the year, but have never seen any with new horns; in fact, I once observed a tame buck antelope, almost daily, for several years, which showed no sign of shedding its horns. With one exception, all the hunters, trappers, guides, etc., whom I have talked with on this subject deny that the antelope sheds its horns. Bridger, the celebrated guide, hunter, and trapper, knew of but one instance, and that was so remarkable that it will not help to prove the affirmative to skeptics. He was once hunting along the base of a rocky, precipitous mountain, following the only practicable game trail in those parts, when, as he turned the sharp corner of a huge rock, he saw just in front of him, and rapidly approaching, a buck antelope pursued by

several wolves. The buck, on seeing Bridger, stopped so suddenly that *his horns dropped off at Bridger's feet!*

—Never were our houses better arranged for pictures, and never have people been less inclined to purchase them. The subdued colors of the Morris paper-hangings, the rich, dark tints of curtains and upholstered furniture, are admirably fitted to set off the colors of oil-paintings, provided there is any light in which to show them; and our sombre parlors and libraries actually demand the relief of the gold frame as well as the brass sconce. By preference I might be inclined to the purchase of a fine head or figure-painting, did not my judgment tell me that there are qualities in a good landscape representation which, for many reasons, would be paramount. In the first place, it is like an open window, giving upon a beautiful country scene; and in the city this is an element of primary importance. If it has atmosphere and distance it actually gives length or breadth to a room. On entering an apartment the eye falls easily upon the horizon of the picture opposite the door, and the room goes off into immeasurable perspective. I recall a gallery twenty feet in width which stretches out to forty feet by means of a skillfully painted "interior," the long retreating arches of which lead one easily into distant and suggestive space.

When "better times" come, we may have learned, by the want of good pictures, what to buy and where to hang. When the *bric-à-brac* fever has spent itself, it will be succeeded by a return to the purchase of good paintings. And we know better how to buy than we did ten years ago.

—At a recent *soirée* of the Royal Society, the Fellows and their guests gathered with interest around what at first glance seemed to be an ordinary *carte-de-visite*. It was not, however, the picture of one but of many individuals, — the Portrait of a Family. The photographed faces of a large family and their near relatives had been placed in an album, and one after another had been copied on the same plate, — face upon

face, — the time required for taking a single portrait being equally divided among them by covering and uncovering the camera while the portraits were successively brought before it. The result was very striking, — almost mystical. One looked upon a life-like, expressive, and even beautiful face of a human being that, individually, never existed. But also it was a real being, and one that can never die. A family name may perish, but a family is immortal. The stream of its life expands, indeed, to a shoreless sea. If a man and wife had two children, and even that moderate average of increase continued in their line for twenty-five generations, their descendants would equal the population of Great Britain. If by some searching glass we could read all the lines on this average face of a family, if we could go on adding such generalized portraits and discerning all their characters, we should have types of mankind, and in the end — if there were any end — a portrait of the human race.

But where no tangible magnifier enables us to search the far depths of this personal-impersonal face, imagination may lend us further vision. It resembles all who sat before the great artist, — the sun, — and yet no one of them, however pronounced in feature, can be identified in it. All are raised somewhat, some a great deal; the highest owes something here to the lowest. It is only the Smith family, but with what romance does it invest the Smiths! How unconscious were we — and they — that through all their loves, cares, sorrows, pursuits, nature was steadily carrying forward a persistent character, a convoy of some quality she is resolved shall inhere in humanity!

—I went on a journey the other day through the back regions of one of the older States, to a little village which is yet untouched by any railroad line. It is a drowsy, gossiping market town, precisely like thousands of others in the country. Besides its county jail, its Catholic chapel, and two meeting-houses, these are some of the things which I found there: —

The carpenter, an old Scotchman who had followed his trade at sea for forty years, off every coast, and had ended with Kane.

The priest, an Alsatian Jesuit, under some cloud for which he had been exiled to this barren shore. No need to fish here for souls or for preferment; the man composedly gave himself up to studying spiders.

The minister, who had been, twenty years ago, a lawyer of acumen and force in New Orleans. There was a divorce, a duel; the husband, who killed his man, went into the church, took this charge, and worked in his old age for his Master with a fervid, hopeless zeal, strangely pathetic and effective.

There was a great man visiting the village while I was there, — Sharp (worth uncounted millions), of New York. We all looked at his gold-plated harness with bated breath. Sharp had been a farm boy, with an itching palm, in the neighborhood, thirty years ago. He was back now to look after his uncle, old Sam. Sam had starved himself until he was sixty to save his few thousands; now a materialized spirit and her family had quartered themselves on him, and the money was going fast.

The postmistress was a wizened old creature, in a knit woolen jacket, and patched shoes that clattered as she dealt out the pounds of brown sugar, or yards of yellow calico, or the few grimy letters. Now and then the pure intonation of the cracked voice startled a stranger, or a brilliant gleam from the gray eyes under the spectacles. This woman had been a power in Washington when women of culture and power were few. Old Aaron Burr had bowed to her budding beauty. The men who were giants in those days gathered about her father's table. "She had a shrewd wit, and that memory for details and magnetic presence which go to make up the great politician," said the greatest politician of his day of her. But for a slight chance she thinks her husband would have been minister to France. But the chance, death, was not to be set aside, and she came to this village post-office instead of Versailles. She thinks

this, but does not say it. You shall not hear from her the story of her life.

On my way from the lonely little hamlet to a city where you might reasonably look for different people, I happened to read a late number of one of the heaviest British reviews, and found its final sentence upon the impossibility of that Bore of Expectation, the American novel. It declared that, owing to the rapid fusion of classes in the United States, characters for representation, if people of any culture, must all be found upon a dead social level, and offer therefore no dramatic possibilities to the novelist; whereas in English novels, from the graded ranks, there is an endless supply of incident and passion in the friction of society, in the ambition of individuals to pass its intangible barriers, in misalliances, etc.

It seemed to me our novelists were not sufficiently grateful for this very fusion. They have a chance to test their subjects in every change of circumstance, and so strip character of circumstance. The artist in human nature may miss the social scaffolding for his novels which has served its turn so long in England (and the American substitute, if he tries it, will prove very shifty); but he will find in this country not only divers figures, but certain new and unique lights thrown upon each figure which are not possible in older civilizations.

— When an English novelist does us the honor of introducing any of our country-folks into his fiction, he generally displays a commendable desire to invent something very typical in the way of names for his American *dramatis personæ*. His success is seldom or never commensurate with his desire. If he were only moderately familiar with American names, he would not bother himself by appealing to his imagination. Any city directory would furnish him with more material than he could use in a century. Charles Reade might have obtained in such a work a happier title than Fullalove for his Yankee captain, though I doubt, on the whole, if Anthony Trollope could have got anything better than Olivia Q. Fleabody for the young

woman from "the States" in his last novel. Perhaps I am rash in saying his last novel, for *Is He Popenjoy?* was published nearly a month ago, and the industrious author may have turned out three or four novels since then. To call a sprightly young female advocate of woman's rights Olivia Q. Fleabody was very happy indeed; to be candid, it was much better than is usual with Mr. Trollope, who has traveled extensively in this country, and whose misunderstanding of everything American is in consequence nearly complete. But Fleabody is excellent; it was probably suggested by Peabody, which must have struck Mr. Trollope as comical (just as Trollope strikes us as comical), or, at least, as not serious. What a capital name Veronica Trollope would be for a hoydenish young woman in a society novel! I fancy that all foreign names seem odd to a stranger. I know that the signs above shop-doors in England and on the Continent used to amuse me often enough, when I was over there. (One of Dickens's characters is the proprietor of a lollipop establishment in the charming little town of Chester,—I think it was Chester.) I am aware that many of our American names are sufficiently queer; but English writers always make merry over them, as if our very queerest names were not thrown completely into the shade by some of their own. Several years ago I read in the sober police reports of *The Pall-Mall Gazette* (I've the paragraph carefully preserved in an old scrap-book) an account of a young man by the name of *Onions* who was arrested (by a "peeler," of course!) for stealing money from his employers, Messrs. Joseph Pickles & Co., "stuff merchants," of London. What mortal could have a more ludicrous name than Onions, unless it were Pickles, or Pick-

led-Onions? And then for Onions to be engaged in the vegetable line! Could there be a more incredible coincidence? As a coincidence it is nearly awful. No American story-writer would dare to present that fact in his novel; it would not be accepted even as probable fiction. In the mean while Olivia Q. Fleabody is quite *cléver*—for Mr. Trollope.

—If your contributor who contends that *chalet* should be written without the circumflex accent is wrong, he is wrong in very excellent company; for M. Littré himself, an indisputable authority in such matters, sustains the contributor's position.

Apropos of this, I am permitted to quote the following passage from a letter addressed some time ago by Mr. P. G. Hamerton to his American publishers, who were then engaged in reprinting one of that author's delightful books:—

"The English text is all right, but in French words there are some errors. The printer ought not to put any accent on the *a* in *chalet*,—he always writes it *châlet*, which is a mistake I cannot imagine myself to have committed in the manuscript. This blunder begins at page —, and I suppose your printers intend to go on sinning in like manner to the end of the volume. If the sheets are stereotyped when this reaches you, the accent might easily be removed with a small chisel wherever it occurs on the *a* in *chalet*, and I beg that this may be done. It may be an American habit to put a circumflex accent on *chalet*, but in France no one does it, and the word is French. . . . I find on referring to some books in my library that the English always stick a circumflex over the *a* in *chalet*, though it is quite incorrect. No French philologist of any importance does it or would do it."

RECENT LITERATURE.

It happens, curiously, that just as the long-expected life of Charlotte Cushman¹ makes its appearance Mr. William Black is developing the character of an imaginary actress in his serial story, *Macled of Dare*. In that tale Miss Gertrude White, the heroine, is made to say: "I have to sympathize with so many characters—I have to be so many different people—that I don't quite know what my own character is, or if I have any at all;" which, it seems to us, is a thing that the real Miss White (supposing there had been one) would never have felt or said. Real actors and actresses, so far as we have record of them, possess very decided natures, and know perfectly well that they have characters which are not in the least obscured by their impersonations on the stage. A better offset to Mr. Black's feebly imagined bit of fancifulness than the story of Miss Cushman's career, and Miss Stebbins's sketch of her personality, could not be asked. We find here an actress who surpassed most of her sisterhood in the complete assumption of a variety of parts, both male and female, and yet possessed, quite beyond and independently of these, a powerful and charming personality of her own. So completely did she identify herself with Queen Katharine, in *Henry VIII.*, "that the tender inspiration of the last scene would be visible in her face and eyes long after she had left the stage." *Lady Macbeth* she impersonated with an equal, perhaps a greater force; yet she disliked the part, and preferred to read rather than act in the play of *Macbeth*, because in the reading of the other parts she could find relief from the strain she experienced in the realization of a character in all ways so opposed to her own. As Miss Stebbins says, with an approach to eloquence, "There was a side to her which . . . enabled her to fill the rôle of a noble and thoughtful woman. She analyzed all her parts, and missed no shade of their true embodiment; but in her own supreme rôle no study and no analysis was necessary, for God had cast her for the part." It is in this supremacy of the woman without injury to the artist that one finds the meas-

ure of Miss Cushman's greatness; and this it is, also, which gives to the present biography its chief attraction. The record is not that of a life rich in family associations with the stage, and filled with reminiscences of famous people, like the autobiography of Mrs. Kemble. It does not supply us that minute picture of an entire career, with abstracts of some of its highest moods and elaborate correspondence, presented in the recent memoir of Macready, which has taken its place almost as a model of what every biography in this department should be. One is, in fact, surprised that Miss Cushman's letters should not have been better preserved, and that almost nothing should have been done in the way of collecting her observations on her art and her criticisms of other histrionic interpretations than her own. Leaders in the dramatic profession so inevitably and regrettably fade from memory when the spell of their personal presence is forever withdrawn that too much cannot be done to preserve in printed memorials those details of their acting, their conception of parts, their advice to other actors, which can alone secure to later generations the value of their achievements in histrionic art. But, if we must deplore the absence of these particulars from Miss Stebbins's memoir, we are ready to accord due praise for the full and enthusiastic manner in which the superb characteristics of the subject are brought forward. Nothing could be better than the careful account of Miss Cushman's ancestry, with its mingling of stern Puritan rectitude and of that gentler æsthetic bias derived from the Babbitt family. The story of her early struggles, too, is one of absorbing interest. The failure of her voice; the hurried change from singing to acting; the flush of first success, which led her to expect too much; the subsequent reverses; and the three years' hard work as "walking lady" at the Park Theatre, and harder work as manager of the Walnut Street Theatre, while acting alternate nights with Macready in New York,—all this, and her heroic efforts to maintain her family, compose a rapid and striking narrative. It was at the close of this period that Macready, whom she supported in Boston, noted in his diary that she had her art still to learn; a some-

¹ *Charlotte Cushman: Her Letters and Memories of her Life.* Edited by her friend, EMMA STEBBINS. Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co. 1878

what too patronizing remark, like the one he made concerning Mrs. Kemble (that she did not know the elements of her art), for in a very short time afterward she gained magnificent triumphs in London. But the reason of the full expansion of her powers and of undisputed success somehow fails, as presented in the biography, to meet one's expectations. Perhaps this is owing to the want of material of the right sort, perhaps to a certain limitedness in Miss Cushman's intellectual interests; but it is a fault which will be less apparent to readers who do not stand so close to the epoch treated. Miss Stebbins sometimes writes too much as if she were addressing a circle of acquaintances, and her style is not conspicuously good. But, whatever its short-comings, the book is sincere, and it belongs to a class in which American literature is not rich enough. We may congratulate ourselves on this substantial addition to the library of reminiscence.

— The sources from which *L'Art*¹ draws its treasures seem inexhaustible; the last volume for 1877 and the first for 1878 are as wonderfully rich and varied as those at which we first looked; the only difference is that now the surprise is gone, and now we expect wonders of *L'Art*. 'It is impossible to give a full idea of the abundance of this review, so far beyond anything of its kind hitherto attempted, and if we mention one thing rather than another it is not because the other is not almost as worthy of notice. Here in the closing volume of the year past are some unpublished letters of Delacroix, particularly interesting and valuable for the preliminary sketches for his *Medea*, in the Museum of Lille, which is also reproduced in an etching, — one of the eleven magnificent etchings in the volume. There is a continued article on *Delft faience*; another on *Fromentin*, with numerous reproductions of his African sketches; a full and careful study of *Poussin*, with — of course — admirable illustrations from his works; a paper on *Benvenuto Cellini*, so much more widely known to readers by his autobiography than to connoisseurs by his works of art. Six papers devoted to the Museum of Lille are apparently the first of a series which is to make known the wealth of art-galleries in the provincial cities of France. At the

same time the art of other ages and countries is not neglected: the extremely interesting and valuable studies of Italian art are continued; there is a notice of the Liverpool Art Club's Exhibition of Fans; in the first volume for this year Horatio N. Powers writes of the New York Society of Decorative Art and its loan exhibition. The same volume contains the fourth, fifth, and sixth of the *Silhouettes of Contemporary artists*, namely, Gustave Brion, the Alsatian; Léon Belly, the painter of Egyptian character; and the painter and engraver Félix Bracquemond. It is almost superfluous to say that these papers are abundantly illustrated from the works of the artists. A special feature of the volume is a series of twelve crayons in black and red reproducing sketches of J. F. Millet. Rubens's work in Italy, Spain, and Russia forms the subject of three essays. A charming peculiarity of *L'Art*, which we do not think we have mentioned before, is its illustrated reviews of new books on art. All the editorial departments and the full and satisfactory system of correspondence are perfectly sustained.

— In a brief preface, Mr. Luigi Monti owns the authorship of Mr. Sampleton's adventures as American consul at the Mediterranean port of Verdecuerno.² Mr. Monti was for twelve years our useful consul at Palermo, but under the workings of our uncivil disservice system was displaced, and has been kept out of an office which it is his sufficient disqualification to be able to fill better than any one else. If it had been his purpose to revenge himself upon the stupid order of things to which he owed his dismissal, he could not have done so more effectively than by painting to the life the misconceptions, mortifications, blunders, and sufferings of the average American appointee to consular service, as he has in this amusing and humiliating little book. But we fancy him governed by different motives, and we congratulate him on having produced a sketch which not only abounds in amiable satire, but is admirably faithful in all its characterizations. It will not have much, if any, effect upon the powers which mismanage such matters at Washington, but it adds to our literature several pieces of portraiture which are done with sympathy and insight into American nature and

¹ *L'Art*. Revue hebdomadaire illustrée. Troisième année: Tome IV. Quatrième année: Tome I. Paris: A. Ballue. New York: J. W. Bouton & Co.

² *Adventures of an American Consul Abroad*. By SAMUEL SAMPLETON, Esq., Late United States Consul at Verdecuerno. Boston: Lee & Shepard 1878.

conditions, as well as with charming skill. Samuel Sampleton and his excellent little wife are keeping a boarding-school at Quahaugsville on Cape Cod, and filling their place in life with the satisfaction and success which come of natural fitness and training for it, when he is sent out to Verdecuerno, totally ignorant of its language, its customs, the duties of his office, the etiquette of his position, or the dignity attaching to it. To heighten his misery with the last touch of cruelty, he is paid the salary of a third-rate department-clerk, and he finds that he is not only not able to live for nothing in Verdecuerno, as he was told in Quahaugsville before starting, but that his fifteen hundred dollars a year scantily enable him to take a shabby apartment outside the walls in a lodging-house occupied by merchant's clerks, military officers of low grade, and the employees of the other consuls. Here he accommodates his family and the American eagle in three small rooms, and here he receives the visits of his colleagues and all the local dignitaries; here he remains, without society and without the recognition due his rank, till he is moved at the end of a few years to make way for a successor even more unfit than himself. The picture is in no wise overdrawn, but is carefully subdued; among its most pleasing qualities are the delicate respect with which the characters of the consul and his wife are studied, and the cordial feeling for the simple, genuine, and worthy Americanism which they represent. They are merely shown to be out of place, while it is suggested that in their true place they are irreproachable. They have the best hearts and the soundest principles; they preserve their self-respect, while their pride suffers from the snubbing and pity and patronage which they receive on every hand, and must receive. The consul tells his story himself, with great modesty and unconsciousness, and just enough glimmerings of the author's light upon his narrative to make it delightful. All the other figures in the book are sketched with good-humored skill, and but for its bitter lesson it would be thoroughly enjoyable; as literature it is thoroughly enjoyable. We wish, however, that it might, as a civil service tract, have the greatest possible currency. As we said, there is little hope of influencing legislation on the subject, but the American

people, who are not ungenerous whatever they are, ought to understand how and why their consular system is the shabbiest in the whole world.

— One is apt to look with suspicion upon an edition of the works of Shakespeare sent out with the assertion that it is perfect, for up to the present moment not one of the legion of editors has been able to give a text that would stand the test of criticism in all points, nor has the most diligent and capable student been successful in deciding upon the chronological order of the plays nor the date at which they were produced. We have before us, however, an edition which is heralded as "the perfect Shakespeare," that attempts to accomplish all this.¹ It is a convenient and well-printed small quarto volume, illustrated with four hundred engravings on wood, evidently by German artists, which are helps to the reader and adornments to the book. The merits of the text need not detain us long, for Professor Delius is no exception to the general statement of Mr. Richard Grant White regarding German Shakespeareans, that there can be no doubt that as to the text of Shakespeare "their labors have been entirely fruitless." We have examined the work of Professor Delius in this respect in difficult passages only to be disappointed. His chronological arrangement possesses little value, especially as it is unsupported by any reasons, though as regards the later plays he has probably arrived at results that are approximately correct.

The interest of the volume for us — and we think we may speak for the general reader also — centres in the introduction, by Mr. Frederick J. Furnivall, who is the director of the New Shakspeare (*sic*) Society and the inciter to much good work in Early English literature. This is the most stimulating, lively, and interesting piece of work on the subject that we have read for many a day. It bristles all over with its author's peculiarities, for Mr. Furnivall is unlike any one else in his literary style, and even the conventionalities of orthodox spelling are no barrier to the impetuosity and independence of his spirits. We admire Mr. Furnivall, and always enjoy reading what he writes, though we may not succumb to his reasoning or be entirely pleased with his spirit. A superficial glance at his work shows that he is in a small way a spelling

Illustrated. London, Paris, and New York: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin.

¹ *The Leopold Shakspeare. The Poet's Works in Chronological Order, from the Text of Professor DELIUS, with an Introduction by F. J. FURNIVALL*

reformer. He not only writes "fixt," as Hare did forty years ago, but gives us also "ringd," "playd," "birds - nested," "cay-ennd," and the like, which is proof positive that familiarity with the orthographic freedom of Early English writers has bred in him contempt for the absurdities of our present spelling.

The object of Mr. Furnivall's introduction is to show the proper method of studying Shakespeare, to recount in brief the story of his life, and to present a philosophical chronological arrangement of the plays and poems. The matter he gives would fill a volume, and we wish that we had it in a separate publication, printed from type of fair size. The order of the plays is established by external evidence, internal evidence, allusions, and metrical tests, and upon these bases Mr. Furnivall proceeds to give his arrangement and the ingenious reasons for it. He says that the work of the first Victorian school of Shakespearean scholars was mainly confined to antiquarian illustration, emendation, and verbal criticism, while that of the second, represented by the members of the New Shakspere Society, is to study the growth and oneness of Shakespeare, the links between his successive plays, the light thrown on each by comparison with its neighbor, the distinctive characteristic of each period and its contrast with the others, and the treatment of the same or like incidents in the different periods of Shakespeare's life. He complains very justly that the plays have not been sufficiently studied as a whole, but have been looked upon as "a conglomerate of isolated plays, without order or succession, bound together only by his name and the covers of the volume that contained them." Mr. Furnivall is right, for no author ought to be studied without a recognition of the fact that his works are the growth of his living mind, and contain in their successive parts evidences of their gradual production that may be made of use as guides to others; but we need to be guarded in laying down law and making assertions in this respect, for no author has ever produced a series of regularly improving works, nor is this the rule. We cannot, therefore, determine the date of a poem or a play by its quality, though that is one of the elements to be considered in settling a disputed point.

Mr. Furnivall views the writings of Shakespeare under four quite natural divisions. The plays are distributed, eleven each to the first and second periods, ten to the

third, and five to the fourth, according to the plan by which we have already shown that their chronology is settled. It should be premised, before presenting Mr. Furnivall's arrangement in detail, that he does not consider every date settled beyond dispute, but as subject to revision. We add, for our part, that an orderly study of Shakespeare makes necessary some sort of chronological arrangement, and that a reasonably correct one, though not absolutely perfect, is better than none at all. Such an arrangement gives the mind that "prenotion" which Bacon declares to be necessary at the beginning of an investigation to throw light over the field of inquiry and introduce a satisfactory method into the whole course of examination.

Mr. Furnivall pronounces Titus Andronicus not Shakespeare's, but touched up by him for the stage; and in this he agrees with the modern commentators. It belongs, however, to the first period, and is attributed to the year 1587. After it he places the Comedy of Errors, or Mistaken-Identity, group, including *Love's Labour's Lost*, 1588-1589? Comedy of Errors, 1589? and *Midsummer - Night's Dream*, 1590-1591? Next comes the Two Gentlemen of Verona, 1590-1591; it connects the whole group with the next, the Passion group, comprising *Romeo and Juliet*, 1591-1593, and the poems *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece* and the *Pastoral Pilgrim*, or so much of the last mentioned as belongs to Shakespeare. In these productions he finds strong passion and rich fancy. "The love which we saw rise in the Errors and develop in the Two Gentlemen bursts into full force in *Romeo and Juliet*. The play gives us that passion lawful in woman and man; *Venus and Adonis* gives it us unlawful in woman; the Rape of *Lucrece*, unlawful in man." In the next group, the Early Histories, Shakespeare turned to the great political questions which were stirring his countrymen in his time, and gave them *Richard II.*, 1593? the three parts of *Henry VI.*, 1592-1594? and *Richard III.*, 1594? In these he showed his patriotism, "spoke his own opinions, and preached his own moral."

The plays of the second period open with *King John*, 1595? and the *Merchant of Venice*, 1596?—a history and a comedy, forming the *Life-Plea* group. In these rhyme plays a secondary part, and they exhibit a greater fullness of characterization and power than the early plays did. The author's experience in life had increased, and with it his dra-

matic power. The Taming of the Shrew, 1596-1597, is linked to this group and binds it to the next, composed of the three comedies of Falstaff, with the trilogy of Henry IV., V., — 1 Henry IV., 1596-1597, 2 Henry IV., 1597-1598, the Merry Wives, 1598-1599, and Henry V., 1599. From the love and friendship exhibited in Portia, Antonio, Bassanio, and Bianca we are turned to "the headstrong valor of Hotspur, the wonderful wit of Falstaff, the vanquished rebels who wound England with their horses' hoofs, the noble rivalry of Henry Percy and Henry Prince of Wales, and the sight of how 'ever did rebellion find rebuke.' Love gives place to war: kingdoms are striven for, not fair girls' hands; rebels, not shrews, are tamed." The change from the earlier historical plays is one "from spring to summer." Next, we have a group of three Sunny Comedies, coupled together by the "link of mistaken-identity or personation." They are, *Much Ado*, 1599-1600, *As You Like It*, 1600, and *Twelfth Night*, 1601. In the first we see, in Benedick and Beatrice, a development of Biron and Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost*, while Hero is the prototype of Hermione in *Winter's Tale*, written eleven years later. The last play of this second period is the "darkening comedy" *All's Well*, 1601-1602, which is so distasteful to Mr. Furnivall that he wishes Shakespeare had given the subject the go-by; but it is an appropriate link, he thinks, between periods marked respectively by sunshine and storm. The sonnets are next considered, for, though written at intervals during a period of many years, Mr. Furnivall deems them the best preparation for the third period plays.

He says, "The stern decree of that period seems to me to be, 'There shall be vengeance, death, for misjudgment, failure in duty, self-indulgence, sin,' and the innocent who belong to the guilty shall suffer with them: Portia, Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, lie beside Brutus, Hamlet, Othello, Lear." Here also four groups are made: I. The Unfit-Nature or Under-burden-falling group, comprising *Julius Cæsar*, 1601, *Hamlet*, 1602-1603, and *Measure for Measure*, 1603. II. The Tempter-Yielding group, *Othello*, 1604? *Macbeth*, 1605-1606. This is followed by a "link" play, *King Lear*, 1605-1606, the first Ingratitude and Cursing play. III. The Lust or False-Love group, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1606-1607? and *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1606-1607. IV. Second Ingratitude and Cursing group, *Coriolanus*, 1607-1608? and *Timon of Athens*,

1607-1608? This is a magnificent but terrible period, in sharp contrast both with the happiness of the one which preceded it and the calmness of that which followed. In his own bitterness and world-weariness Shakespeare paints the scourge of the avenger, the blindness of a furious fate.

From this picture Mr. Furnivall turns our gaze to the fourth period, the plays of which are all of Reunion, or Reconciliation and Forgiveness. I. By men, *Pericles*, 1608-1609, *The Tempest*, 1609-1610? II. By women (mainly), *Cymbeline*, 1610, *The Winter's Tale*, 1611, and *Henry VIII.*, 1612-1613.

We have thus far permitted Mr. Furnivall's "groups" and "periods" to speak for themselves. They will, undoubtedly, strike most of us as too much refined and detailed, but we think they will serve an excellent purpose if they lead us to study carefully the arguments adduced in their favor by their author. He gives us some remarks of Mr. Spedding upon them. That careful critic says, "Classing the plays according to their general character, I find that they fall naturally into these broad divisions, and that they have a kind of correspondence with the divisions which are observable in the life of man; but if you want to separate these natural divisions into subordinate groups, according to the particular feature which distinguishes each, it seems to me that you must have as many groups as there are plays. The distinguishing feature would depend upon many things besides the author's state of mind. It would depend upon the story which he had to tell; and the choice of the story would depend upon the requirements of the theatre, the taste of the public, the popularity of the different actors, the strength of the company. A new part might be wanted for Burbage or Kempe. The two boys that acted *Hermia* and *Helena*, — the tall and the short one, — or the two men who were so like that they might be mistaken for each other, might want new pieces to appear in, and so on. The stories would be selected from such as were to be had (and had not been used up) to suit the taste of the frequenters of the theatre, and the characters and incidents would be according to the stories."

We think that such thoughts as these will suggest themselves to most readers of Mr. Furnivall's very ingenious remarks about the details of his chronological arrangement, for it seems as though the thousand and one

accidental reasons for the selection of a particular dramatic incident, or form of treating any subject chosen, have been omitted from Mr. Furnivall's considerations, and they must have been very potent in their influence. Notwithstanding this, however, it still remains that the man Shakespeare and his mind are back of all, exerting an almost creative power, to which accidental circumstances must often have given way. We feel, therefore, that Mr. Furnivall's mode of study is a correct one, which must

be very fruitful of good whenever carefully followed. To push it to extremes would be to "think too brainlessly of things."

In concluding his introduction, Mr. Furnivall gives a very good list of books adapted to help the student, an elaborate table of the metre and date of the plays (rearranged from one by Mr. F. G. Fleay, author of the *Shakespeare Manual*), Professor Dowden's order and classification of the plays, and a multitude of facts and fancies, all of which are entertaining, and most of them valuable.

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